

PERCUSSIVE ARTS CENTRE [Regd.]



**ACHIEVEMENTS IN
THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS
OVER 50 YEARS
(1947-1997)**

at

Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium
K.R. Road, Bangalore-4

from

24-5-98 to 26-5-98

© 6630079

No.183, 8TH CROSS, 2ND BLOCK, JAYANAGAR, BANGALORE- 560 011.
INDIA

PERCUSSIVE ARTS CENTRE (REGD.)

183, 8th Cross, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore - 560 011.

ABOUT THE ART CENTRE AND PUBLICATIONS ETC

".....I appreciate the excellent work done in the field of Taala - by you. I am proud to have friends like you and it is my earnest desire that you may succeed in all the ventures that you undertake in the field of music." ...

Pandit Nikhil Ghosh, Bombay

".....The Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore, under the able direction of Sri Bangalore K. Venkataram deserves all compliments, for having undertaken to print and publish Taala Sangraha I am sure that this will be a very valuable contribution to the field of music....."

Padmabhushan Dr. V. Doreswamy Iyengar

".....The Percussive Arts Centre formed some years back to make people better informed about this area of music. This Centre through a series of programmes including papers, demonstrations etc has highlighted the manifold aspects of Tala and Laya as to inform even lay people. Some of them have been published in the form of monographs. But the major event is Annual Taalavaadyothsava where emphasis is on Thala and Laya. Perhaps, this is the only such Festival held in the country....."

Justice E.S. Venkataramiah

"..... As I see from Delhi *"This conference has a significance and a validity beyond what has been discussed"* here. I can say so with some authority as I am here, presently chairing a Committee in UNESCO which is having very "knowledgeable" discussions on cultural dimensions of development. It would also be appropriate to me that *"the establishment of the Percussive Arts Centre itself has been an important event."* The development of the Centre within a short time to the present status, we owe to Venkataram. Bangalore and Venkataram have become inseparable. *"Institutions like the Percussive Arts Centre, Seminars and conferences such as of today, I am sure contribute a great deal towards these objectives."*

J. Veeraraghavan, Delhi

"...I am happy that the Percussive Art Centre of Bangalore has come forward to undertake Publishing this work (Taala Sangraha, a compendium of Taalas in Karnatak music). I welcome and appreciate their gesture. It is noticed that the Percussive Art Centre has been striving to enlighten the general public on the proper appreciation of the art of laya and highlight the contribution of Layavadyakaras. I wish well in their sincere efforts to promote the interest in laya"

Padma Vibhushan Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna

"..... To my knowledge, there does not appear to be any periodical exclusively devoted to these (persuance of the cause of promotion of Laya and Thaala) aspects of music and your venture will go a long way in bridging this gap and in giving emphasis to the Laya and Thala which are so essential in perception, preservation and propagation of music....."

H. Kamalanath, President, Bangalore Gayana Samaja

PERCUSSIVE ARTS CENTRE (Regd.)



*P.
Dr. W. Ramonath
c/o yash
S. 288*

**ACHIEVEMENTS IN
THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS
OVER 50 YEARS
(1947-1997)**

at

Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium
K.R. Road, Bangalore-4

from

24-5-98 to 26-5-98

© 6630079

No.183, 8TH CROSS, 2ND BLOCK, JAYANAGAR, BANGALORE- 560 011.
INDIA

Proceedings of the Programme organised to highlight the "ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS over 50 years (1947-1997)" held under joint auspices with and at Bangalore Gayana Samaja from 24-5-98 to 26-5-98

Published May 1999

Price : Rs. 150/-

D.T.P. & PRINTING BY :

PRAGATHI LASERS

13/5, Bull Temple Road
BANGALORE-560 004

© 6610240

Sl.No.	Contents	Pg.No
I	Editorial	i-iii
	Foreword - S.N. Chandrasekhar	iv-vi
	Karnataka Kalaa Shree	
	H.S. Anasuya Kulkarni & Sri N.R. Kulkarni	vii
	Programme Schedules - Invitation, Pamphlet	viii-ix
II	1. A Report of the Events	1 - 2
	SYMPOSIUM - Achievements	
	2. Prof. T.R. Subramanyam, New Delhi	3 - 5
	3. Sri. J.W.Lobo, Senior Regional Director, I.C.C.R.	6 - 9
	4. N.S. Krishnamurthy, Former Station Director, All India Radio	10 - 11
	5. Dr. K. Vageesh, Asst. Director, Directorate, AIR, New Delhi	12
	6. S.N.Sivaswamy, (Former Station Director, AIR, and Controller of Commercial T.V. Doordarshan.)	13 - 15
III	SYMPOSIUM - R&D	
	7. Dr. N.Somanathan Scientist, Central Leather Research Institute, Chennai	16 - 18
IV	PAPERS PRESENTED	
	8. Raghu N., Programme Executive, All India Radio, Hassan	19 - 22
	9. H.S.Sudhindra, Mrudanga Vidwan & Convenor, Youth forum	23 - 27
	10. Arun Sukumar, Percussion & Rhythm Programmer	28
	11. G. Raj Narayan, Radel Electronics Pvt. Ltd.	29
V	OTHER TOPICS	
	12. Padma Vibhushan Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer	30 - 33
	13. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. R.Satyanarayana	34-37
	14. Vellore Ramabhadran.	38 - 39
	15. Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman	40 - 41
	16. Te. Ve. Gopalakrishnan	42-48
	17. Mayuram G. Swaminathan	49-53
	18. L.S. Rajagopalan, Trichur	54-57
	19. Alleppey Venkatesan	58-60
	20. B.R.C. Iyengar	61-64
	21. Dr. Radha Venkatachalam	65-70
	22. Sangeetha Kalaarathna Bangalore K. Venkataram	71-75
	23. Observations of Sangeetha Kalaarathna B.V.K. Sastry	76-77
	Percussion ensemble, Laya Vruthi	78
	List of Publications and details thereon, Audio Cassettes released	79-80

ERRATA

PAGE - LINE	PRINTED AS	TO BE READ AS
Front Inner cover - 24	"inseperable"	"Inseparable"
ii - 9 from bottom	"exploration"	"exploitation"
iii - 4 from above	"for"	"from"
iii - 6 from above	"Craftsman"	"Craftsmen"
vi - 2	"variation".	"vocation"
vi - 10	"th"	"the"
iii - 7	"post"	"posted"
iii - 11	" <u>of</u> music <u>in</u> "	" <u>in</u> music <u>of</u> "
iii - 11 & 22	"Papua, New Guinea"	"Papua New Guinea" (Note : Papua New Guinea is the name of a country)
iii - 4 from bottom	"Corporation"	"Co-operation"
2 - 12 from bottom	"Umalapuram"	"Umayalapuram"
25 - 5	"Sahma"	"Sharma"
25 - 8 from bottom	"The art"	Add "of" after "The Art"
71 - 5 from bottom	"sund"	"sound"
72 - 13	"occasions"	(a full stop after) "occasions."
75 - 3	"Tigoor"	"Tiger"
- 10	"Adiyyakudi"	"Ariyakkudi"
- 17	"Pillai musir"	"Pillai. Musin"
- 22	"Rangaramnuja"	"Ranga Ramanuja"
- 29	"Bhagavatha"	"Bhagavathar"
BACK COVER - 9	"senge"	"sense"
18	"unparalleled"	"unparalleled"
20	"aclaim"	"acclaim"

EDITORIAL

When "India's 50 years of Independence" was celebrated all over the country, it struck as to that why not we organise a mega event to highlight in "Achievements in the field of Percussive Art". This was planned accordingly. We availed this opportunity to convey our gratitude to all those who helped the Art Centre by felicitating them. Scheme of events during and after Independence is recalled.

UNESCO published "Some aspects of Cultural policies in India" by Kapila Vatsyayan, the then Deputy Educational Advisor, Ministry of Education and Youth Services, New Delhi in 1972 (25 years before now and 25 years after India's Independence); this study encompassed the theme that culture was not the exclusive right of a small elite revolving around the seat of political power. Sometimes the king or ruler was the patron-in-chief; at other times, highly sophisticated forms were sustained and nurtured through the individual effort of a small group of people subscribing to a particular faith.

By the time India attained political independence, there was a very definite dichotomy between the institutions of traditional culture whether supported by the State or fostered by individuals. The Central Government administered and financed a few cultural institutions. The Indian princely states themselves maintained and sustained efforts in the field of performing arts. Mass media units like the All India Radio which had been set up primarily for the dissemination of official information had already begun to patronise arts, particularly music.

In 1947 when Indians assumed responsibility for the Government, they faced the need to enable the educated Indian to attune himself to this national culture. Establishment of academies, launching schemes of assistance and subsidies to voluntary organisations, with a small but significant assistance and maintenance grants to artists.

Patronage of arts was outside the purview of Governments, Central as well as State, until 1947. The Government of Independent India realised that an effort on a National level was necessary to achieve the objective of preserving, fostering and promoting National Integration through an awareness of culture, particularly the performing arts. Before 1947, Music, Dance and Drama were excluded from the Educational system. At the urban level, they were patronised by Indian princes who subsidised musicians (and dancers) in their courts. Outside the court tradition, they existed by middle class, affluent or otherwise, which supported music (dance) as Community Services not unrelated to activities revolving round the temples. Prior to 1947, the opportunities open to an artist were limited to Teaching. The Sangeet Natak Akademi was established in 1953. It aims at promoting research. During the first 16 years of existence, the activities of the Akademi have been widely dispersed comprising Seminars, Awards, Grants, Subsidy for research work etc. in Documentation in the field of music. Any discussion on development and growth of performing arts would be incomplete without a mention of the vital and active

role played by the All India Radio in patronising, propagating and dissemination of music. A.I.R. has been the single chief patron of Indian Musicians. With the introduction of classical music in AIR, a change has certainly taken place in Musical taste. Indian Classical Music which had been largely the preserve of a limited elite in the early 20 century has been made available to large audiences. The presentation of Classical music on the A.I.R. is an outstanding example of the democratisation of an elite culture. Weekly national programmes of Music have been presented since 1952. A week long (now a month long) festival of Music, Radio Sangeet Sammelan, provides listeners with an opportunity to listen to Classical Vocalists and Instrumentalists from all over the Country. But the Classical musician of today, has to operate within a limited time; most of them have tailored their music to the new needs. This is perhaps an example of an ancient tradition which is meeting the challenge of the most modern media and evolving a new form while retaining its antiquity.

November 4, 1996 marked the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). Dr. John V.Kingston (Former Director, UNESCO, Delhi) wrote about this. The Annual report on World Culture and Development was reproduced from the "Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development" published by the UNESCO, 1995. The World Commission on Culture and Development recommended that UNESCO sponsor an independent team to produce and publish an annual report on World Culture and Development beginning in 1997.

The BJP Government took the first opportunity to use the International forum to signal its commitments to "Cultural pluralism" enshrined in India's tradition and Constitution. Leading the Indian delegation to the Inter-Governmental conference in Stockholm in April 1998 on Cultural policies and development, Dr. L.M.Singhvi, the eminent jurist addressed the UNESCO's conference on behalf of India's Ministry for Human Resources Development; delegation included Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Mallika Sarabhai and Dr. R.V.Ayyar, Secretary, Department of culture, India who also presided over the forum on "Cultural Heritage and Development". Dr. Singhvi talked about India's tradition of handling social diversity and cultural plurality; he cautioned that globalisation, unless properly moderated, could lead to various forms of cultural oppression, discrimination, exploration and an undesirable standardisation of cultures that mistakes homogenisation for modernity.

In our 16th Annual Thaalaavaadyothsav held in May 1997 we deliberated on the "50 years of UNESCO". It was at that time decided to examine the "R&D activities pertaining to Leathers and Woods used for percussive instruments" involving Science and Engineering aspects of 'musical instrumentation'. How many recognise the importance of Science and Mathematics in Music is a moot point. The fact that Science and Mathematics have played a vital role in the evolution of music especially musical instruments is still to be emphasised.

Occasionally, musical instruments have been subjected to scientific study and analysis like the experiments on Mridanga and Tabla by Dr. Sir C.V.Raman which are confined to laboratories; the musicians who are most concerned were conspicuously absent. Instrumentation has to be examined for various angles like Craftsmanship, Science and Performance duly participated by physicists, musicians and craftsman etc. The instruments have undergone several changes passing through several stages of evolution. We cannot and should not overlook the involvement of Engineering in these instruments; we should think of utilising the application of modern Engineering technology to study, analyse and develop the percussions to make them superior to what they are now, to make them available easier, cheaper and also to better & enrich the performance techniques. We still follow the hit and low, the trials in tuning, trial and error methods in fabrications resulting in poor accuracy. It is time that Physicists, Engineers, Musicians, Artisans-Craftsman get together to interact seriously and find out ways of production of superior instruments and thus enrich the field by fresh ideas. We should provide these ideas and make the percussion artist more conscious of the need for methodical, rational approach to solve the problems and work together with men of science, rather than in isolation. Science can make definite contribution in respect of materials used and their properties, vibrational aspects etc. It is in this direction that a symposium had been arranged; the expert body formed then is expected to focus on these, deliberate and come to definite plans and proposals.

We are grateful to all the experts, artists, scholars and connoisseurs who actively participated in this programme.

Our thanks are due to S.N.Chandrashekar who took pains to read through the entire scripts and give us his considered views and the Foreword. Our gratitude to all the authors of the various articles and the organisations who have permitted use of such articles. Our gratitude to H.S.Anusuya, our Convenor, R&D projects and N.R.Kulkarni, our Hon. Director, for their munificent assistance in publishing this volume. Our thanks are also due to Asha and Nagesh of Pragathi Lasers for their co-operation in printing this volume. We record our gratitude to the Department of Culture, Government of India and the Department of Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka for their assistance in organising a programme of this magnitude. We are happy that all the programme presentations have been video taped and documented. We record our indebtedness to Padma Gurudatt and V. Kalavathy for their strenuous efforts in transcribing some of the audio-recorded speeches.

It is hoped that this volume will be received well. Any constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements are welcome, as always.

The publication is presented in different sections; a section containing the foreword, programme schedules, a section containing Report and Symposia details, a section covering various papers presented and another section containing reproduction of various published papers and papers exclusively presented in this event.

Bangalore K. Venkataram

FOREWORD

It seems nothing unnatural that a sense of euphoria should have prevailed in the ongoing celebrations in connection with the 50th year of our Independence. The air all over the country and elsewhere in Indian settlements abroad has been one of jubilation. There seems hardly any attempt to recall the hopes and aspirations our leaders of the freedom movement had set before the nation on its march to liberation from foreign bondage half a century ago. Much less a retrospect on whether those hopes, those aspirations and those dreams have seen fulfilment. If not, no attempt made to see where we have fumbled, where we have gone wrong and to see how they can be retrieved. It is evident that the prospects on the political, economic and social fronts are nothing to rave about. Yet there appears to be no remedial measures in sight.

The situation on the cultural front doesn't seem much different, despite the Governments at the State and Union levels going a whole hog to foster our hoary cultural traditions. True, there is a proliferation of organisations to promote art and culture. The country had never before seen so many institutions imparting lessons in art, music, dance and theatre, the Governments handsomely funding most of them. Nor is there any dearth for sponsorship for all these forms of art. Certainly, there is a frenzy in pursuing studies in these subjects. But the end result is -mediocrity persists, very few if at all, striving to achieve excellence in the respective pursuit.

Here again, attempts to examine the why and wherefore of all the feverish activities not yielding desired results are wanting. It is in this perspective that the Percussive Art Centre's celebrations of the event could be a pointer. The three-day fare, unlike in many cases, was not confined to performances alone. **The focus was on - Seminars on "Achievements in the field of percussive arts in the 50 years" that have gone by, 'R & D' activities etc.** To top it all, it is worth noting that all those who took part in the Seminars are well-known in their respective avocations. Versatile T.V. Gopalkrishna's paper on "Developments in the Art of Percussion and Laya in the past five decades" may well be taken as the key-note address. Veteran Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's paper "Music then and Now" has its relevance too. In "The direction in which the Mridanga should be played" by Vellore Ramabhadran gives useful hints to the younger generation on the vital percussion instrument. T.R. Subramanyam's paper on "Pitch in Indian Music" is as educative. The Role of AIR/TV as envisaged by S.N. Sivaswamy and N.S. Krishnamurthy, both former senior station directors of AIR, gives an insight into the working of the electronic media. N. Raghu, another officer from the AIR, explores how "Laya in Sugama Sangeetha" can make the emerging form more exciting. Mayuram G. Swaminathan sees "An

been subjective. Rather, there seems hardly any focus on achievements which was the theme of the Seminar!

Well, in a manner of speaking, the very fact that **we have today an organisation devoted exclusively to percussive art itself is no small achievement**. That it is 19 years old goes to sustaining its need and usefulness. All along this vital branch of music has remained as an accompanying instrument. **Today it has gained an identity of its own**, even leading music organisations, like the Music Academy, Madras, the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, as also the Karnataka Ganakala Parishath electing percussion artistes to preside over their annual conferences. The Centre itself has gone one further to institute three such distinctions annually - to senior percussive artiste at the national level and one intermediate and a junior promising artiste each on the State level. The two latter awards are open to both vocalists and instrumentalists. As in the case of the above mentioned organisations, titles are bestowed on the three dignitaries.

Around the same time another enterprising percussion artiste, T.A.S. Mani set up a college for laya, indisputably the first of its kind in the country, if not the world over. The Ayyanar College of Music, due to its close proximity to the PAC, also institute lessons in the different branches of the Percussive art. With the

result, one can find today a whole community of percussion artistes, some of them proficient in more than one variation.

The impact of this proliferation is felt even in the periodic audition sessions of the AIR. Almost every such session is made to contend with as many percussionists vying for grading with vocalists and melodic instrumentalists. The trend has certainly augured well for the art, the prestigious annual Radio Sangeet Sammelan time and again featuring more percussion artistes, in the capacity of accompanists.

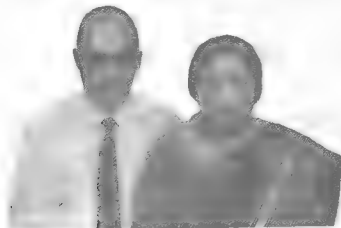
Yet persistent efforts of the Art centre and individual percussion artistes who matter, have failed to yield results in getting the genre solo slots in the AIR schedule, though its Hindustani counterparts like Tabala or the Pakhawaj are enjoying that privilege right through. However, it is a matter for justifiable pride that **percussion ensembles are gaining in popularity**. Presently, as many as five to six such groups are operating, a couple of them having made a mark even in countries abroad. Equally revolutionary is the fact that **some functions play a percussion ensemble for invocation!**

All these are achievements of no small significance. That the percussive art is attracting more and more educated youngsters has also to be noted, many of them so serious that they not only opt for more than one instrument, but seek expertise from every available source, which means the prospect in the field is rosy.

But the same cannot be said about the response from the organisational side. Though the grading and fixation of remunerations in the AIR and DD leave little to be desired, the procedure adopted by other governmental and voluntary agencies in this regard is not free from anomalies. The treatment at this level is step-motherly, to say the least. **The percussive artiste comes last in the priority as far as the payment is concerned.** More often it is a fraction of what the main or the melodic counterpart enjoys, the "saha-pakkavadya" (ghatam, khanjira, morsing, etc.) invariably reduced to a humiliating level.

With the influence of a towering personality like Palghat Mani Iyer, the status of the percussion artiste had considerably improved, though not fully satisfactory especially in the case of the latter. At any rate, it falls much short in comparison with its Hindustani counterpart. It is to achieve this objective that P A C and like minded institutions are striving. One dare say it is not too ambitious an objective, one in which there should be general agreement.

- S.N. Chandrasekhar



KARNATAKA KALAA SHREE

H.S. ANASUYA KULKARNI & SRI N.R. KULKARNI

Vidushi Anasuya Kulkarni underwent training in Karnatak classical vocal music under the great violinists Sangeetha Kalarathna R.R. Keshavamurthy and Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mysore Chowdiah. She was a very popular vocalist and cut records for HMV & AIR. After her wedding with N.R. Kulkarni, Anasuya - Veena Kulkarni had opportunities to visit and stay in different countries round the globe, wherever Kulkarni was post on his UN assignments. She underwent training in Hindustani classical vocal under Mohd. Hussain Sarhang at Kabul.

With her in-depth knowledge of theory she is the first Indian to become an actual performer of music in Indonesia, Papua, New Guinea, Uganda, Bhutan etc. Anasuya has adapted "Angklung", an Indonesian Bamboo rattle instrument to play Karnatak classical music, the Percussive Arts Centre released an audio cassette in May 98 in connection with their programmes to highlight the 'Achievements in the field of Percussive arts over the 50 years'.

Sri Narayan Kulkarni hailing from Kanbur of Bapur Dist, educated in Dharwar, Bijapur and Delhi had a short stint with the Bombay State Road Transport Corporation and Industrial Finance Corporation of India in New Delhi. He went to Kabul in Afghanistan in 1963 to work for Afghan Airlines. In 1964, Kulkarni joined the United Nations Technical Assistance Bureau, subsequently named as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). During his tenure with UNDP, Kulkarni served in Afghanistan, Mongolia, Indonesia, Papua, New Guinea, Uganda, Ethiopia & Bhutan. Kulkarni is responsible in supporting his wife Veena, formerly & popularly known as H.S. Anasuya to take up study of musics of various countries in his different assignments.

Kulkarnis thus became cultural ambassadors of India and are propagating international corporation and understanding in their own unique ways.

Patrons of Art & Culture, Kulkarnis have sponsored this documentation work of the Art Centre with a view to preserve in cold print, the salient aspects of Taalavadyaas and their invaluable technicalities.

© 6630079

PERCUSSIVE ARTS CENTRE

183, 8th Cross, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore- 560 011.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS

at Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium, K.R. Road, Bangalore-4
from 24-5-98 to 26-5-98

INAUGURATION on Sunday 24-5-98 at 9-30 a.m.

by Hon'ble Justice Nittoor Sreenivasa Rau

Key note address by

Prof. T.R. Subramanyam (Delhi)

followed by **Symposium**

At 5.30 p.m. Felicitations - Release of Audio Cassettes
by **Sri. Haranahalli Ramaswamy**

*Daily Programmes from 9-30 a.m. to 12-30 Noon
and 5-30 p.m. to 8-30 p.m.
(as per programmes enclosed)*

VALEDICTION on Tuesday 26-5-98 at 5-30 p.m.

Valedictory address by

Sri A. N. Jayaram

Former Additional Solicitor General of India

followed by Laya Vinyasa by

Mrudanga Kala Shiromani V. Kamalakara Rao
and **Satish Kumar Patri**

Music Lovers and Connoisseurs are all cordially invited

PERCUSSIVE ARTS CENTRE

183, 8th Cross, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore - 560 011.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS-50 YEARS

Programmes (Subject to Alterations)

at Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium, K.R.Road, Bangalore-560 004.

From Sunday 24.5.98 to Tuesday 26.5.98,

On Sunday 24.5.98

at 9.30 a.m.: Laya Vinyasa- "**Laya Surabhi**", Inaguration, Key Note address by **Prof.T.R.Subramanyam (Delhi)**, Symposium: "Role of AIR & DD, Autonomous bodies, Voluntary organisations, Cultural activities in India and abroad etc."

at 5.30 P.M.: Laya Vinyasa- "**Laya Milana**", Felicitations, Layavinyasa: **B.Ravishankar** and **Vyasavittal**, Release of Audio cassettes, Violin Solo by Mysore **M.Nagaraj** followed by Laya Vinyasa by **Dandamudi Rama Mohana Rao** and **Sumathi Rama Mohan Rao** (Double Mrudangam).

On Monday 25.5.98

at 9.30 a.m.: Laya Vinyasa by "**Inchara**", Symposium: **R&D Activities-Leathers and woods** for percussion Instruments-Preliminary survey", Pallavi rendition by **Madural T.N. Seshagopalan**, **Mysore M.Manjunath** (Violin) followed by Laya Vinyasa: **T.K. Murthy** and **B.S.Purshotham**.

at 5.30 P.M.: Laya Vinyasa- "**Mahila Layamadhuri**", **N.Raghu**- "Laya in Sugama Sangeeth", **H.S. Sudhindra** - "Uniform Percussion Notation system and analysis of available texts, publications-a preliminary survey", Laya Vinyasa by **Te. Ve. Gopalkrishnan**

On Tuesday 26.5.98

at 9.30 a.m.: Laya Vinyasa by "**Laya Lahari**", Demonstration of Electronic gadgets in percussions by **Arun Kumar**, Pallavi rendition by **Bellary M.Venkatesh Achar**, **M.Chandrasekharan** (Violin) followed by Laya Vinyasa-**M.T.Rajakesari** and **B.N.Chandramouli**.

at 5.30 p.m.: Laya Vinyasa by **H.P.Ramachar** and **M.A.Krishnamurthy**, Valedictory address, Laya Vinyasa by **V. Kamalakara Rao** and **Satish Kumar Patil**.

A 3-Day 6 - Sessions programme to highlight the achievements in the field of Percussive Arts had been drawn by the Percussive Arts Centre from the 24th to 27 May 1998 at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium. While the Nation is celebrating the 50 years of Independence and several programmes are organised to take stock of the situation and highlight the achievements in the various fields, it was but right that the **Percussive Arts Centre should have planned to document similar data in the field of Percussive Arts.** It is well known that, while Percussive Arts are extremely succinct in nature: these are the most neglected areas in the field, with respect to history, science, art and especially documentation. In this context, this programme is perhaps the first of its kind in the country to have planned and implemented a very large scale documentation of Percussive Arts.

As observed by prof. T.R.Subramanyam of Delhi, the **very concept of invocations through Laya Vinayasas is laudable.** These invocatory laya vinyasas featured the noted major percussion ensembles in the city. "Laya Surabhi" lead by M.Vasudeva Rao, "Laya Milana" lead by B.K. Chandramouli, "Inchra" lead by K.Ravi Shankar, "Mahila Laya Madhura" directed by H.P. Ramachar, "Laya Lahari" of Ayyanar College of music - brought out the cream of talent, young and experienced, aspiring and veteran artistes.

New horizons in recognising and supporting the role of Percussive Arts in their exhibition of independent personality were exhibited by a plethora of Laya Vinayasas (Thani-Solo recitals). Those who participated and provided a variety of artistic and aesthetic pleasure included Dandamudi Rammohan Rao and Sumati Ram Mohan Rao (Double Mridanga), T.K. Murthy and B.S. Purushotham (Mridanga and Khanjari), Te.Ve. Gopalakrishnan and V.Suresh (Mridanga and Ghata), M.T. Rajakesan and B.N. Chandramouli (Mridanga and Khanjari), V.Kamalakar Rao and Satish Kumar Patni (Mridanga & Khanjari) and Tumkur B. Ravishankar and Vyasa Vittala (Mridanga & Khanjari), H.P.Ramachar and M.A.Krishna Murthy (Mridanga & Ghata). These were in addition to an invigorating Laya Vinayasa on Violin by Mysore M. Nagaraj who provided a prelude to Dandamudi's, Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan who rendered an intricate "7/8-eduppu" Pallavi in 4-Kalai, Khanda Thripata with Mysore M. Manjunath on Violin together providing an astonishingly accurate aesthetic music as a prelude to T.K.Murthy, Vocal rendition of a Pallavi in Raga "Raga Choodamani" (Ragavardhini, 32nd Melakartha) in an ashtothhara Thala "Raga Vardhana" of 19 counts to an avarttha by Te.Ve. Gopalakrishnan, a sophisticated "5/8 Eduppu", 4-Kalai, Adi Thala Pallavi by Ballary M. Venkatesh Achar with M. Chandrasekaran on Violin for which M.T.Raja Kesari and B.N. Chandramouli played "Thani".

N. Raghu, Programme Executive, AIR, Hassan provided a competent Lecdem on "Laya in Sugam Sangeeth" Arun Kumar, a Percussion and Rhythm Programmer, **demonstrated natural sound of different percussions through electronic gadgets.** G.Raj Narayan, himself a Flutist demonstrated his latest model of innovation "Electronic Tabala" based on PCM wave synthesis technology that utilises samples of actual sounds of Tabala (Details furnished separately). **These can truly be claimed as "achievements in these 50 years in the field of Percussive Arts".**

The other three major topics were covered in 2 symposia and a paper presentation. A Symposium on "Achievements in the field of Percussive Arts" was chaired by S.N. Shivaswamy, Former Station Director, AIR. Prof T.R. Subramanyam of Delhi gave the keynote address wherein he traced the achievements in percussive Arts. J.W.Lobo,

Sr Regional Director, ICCR explained the role of ICCR. N.S Krishnamurthy, Former Station Director, AIR, explained in brief the role of AIR. H.P.Ramachar and Dr.T.V.Kuppuswamy of Delhi also spoke. These presentations are published separately. The second symposium was on "R&D activities - Leathers & Woods for Percussions". This preliminary survey was chaired by S.N. Chandrashekar, noted art critic, Dr N Somanathan, Scientist, Central leather Research Institute. Madras presented a paper highlighting the Laboratory studies on Leathers and Woods used for Percussion. A.Veerabhadraiah presented certain details on these aspects. Te.Ve. Gopalakrishnan explained some of his own experimental works regarding these. Short Term and Long Term arrangements for providing required quantity of desired quality were discussed. **An expert body was recommended to go into details like drawing suitable specifications, marketing, survey of available resources etc. A preliminary survey on the necessity and available literature, texts and publications to establish a uniform Notation system for practice of Percussion** was presented by H.S.Sudhindra, Convenor, Youth Forum of Arts Centre and an upcoming mridangam artist. He traced about 14 available publications from 1965 to 1994 in Tamil, Telugu and English and he also traced the essential contents for an uniform notation system.

Justice Nittoor Sreenivasa Rau, President of the Arts Centre inaugurated the programme, while Veteran educationist, freedom fighter, Gandhian Haranahally Ramaswamy felicitated Mysore M.Nagaraj (Violin) and R.K. Padmanabha (Vocal) for their unique achievements. He also felicitated Justice Nittoor Sreenivasa Rau, B.V.K. Sastry, V.Krishnan, Dr.A.H. Rama Rao and N.R.Ananthanarayan for their continuous services to the field of Percussion Art in general, Percussive Arts Centre in particular. M.R.Doraswamy Iyengar who was not present was felicitated by Dr. N.R.Shetty and K.K.Murthy, President, Academy of Music, Bangalore who could not be present was felicitated by T.T. Vasu, President, Madras Music Academy, later on during the festival. Hamahally Ramaswamy also released **two audio cassettes, Swarna Bharathi, Patriotic songs of Mayuram Vishwanatha Shastry**, directed by S.Shankar and a **recital of Karnatak Music on Angklung**, an Indonesian Bamboo rattle instrument played by H.S. Anasuya Kulkarni on the occasion.

The valedictory function was presided by A.N.Jayaram, Former Additional Solicitor General of India. **An open-house feed back session** was participated by several performing artistes. B.K.Chandramouli, B.S. Purushotham, V.Kamalakra Rao, H.P. Ramachar, V. Krishna, Bangalore K.Venkataram discussed several points **pertaining to the progress of Percussive Arts**. A.N.Jayaram complimented the Art Centre on its role in documenting and promoting Percussive arts.

Articles received from Prof T.R. Subramanyam, Delhi, Aleppey Venkateshan, B.R.C. Iyengar - Secunderabad, Dr. Radha Venkatachalam - New Delhi, articles of Vellore Ramachandran and Presidential address of Umalapuram Shivaraman furnished by Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras, (translated by Neela Ramagopal), L.S. Rajagopalan of Trichur, Mayuram G.Swaminathan- New Delhi, Te.Ve. Gopalakrishnan, N. Raghu - Hassan have all been published now.

Those who had sent their greetings wishing the celebrations, success, included T.S. Parthasarathy, Kapila Vatsyayan, Shabhar Mukherjee, S. Rajam, S.R. Janakraman, Dr. V.S. Sampathkumaracharya, Shanmukhananda Fine Arts - Bombay, Dr.N.Pattabhiraman, Mayuram G.Swaminathan, Station Director - AIR - Bangalore, Director General - AIR - New Delhi, Sa.Sri.Marulayya - President - Kannada Sahithya Parishat, Sringeri Shankara Mutt, Tiruvurur Bhakthavatsalam.

The celebrations were assisted by the Department of Culture, Government of India, Dept. of Kannada and Culture, Govt. Of Karnataka and data generated has all been documented.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS IN THESE 50 YEARS

Prof. T.R. Subramanyam, New Delhi

It is a universally accepted fact that the richest system of music in this globe is Indian Music. Ours is the only country on earth with not one but two great systems of classical music-Hindusthani and Karnatic. One major winning point in Karnatic music is the rhythm management which admits of any amount of innovation and growth. In Western music, the rhythm instrument is a drum and the very name drum may make an Indian look down at it. It is a common noun that does not sound like a name. The drum just maintains the pulse rate of the music and it calls for more of brawn than brain. In a big contrast with this, the Indian monarch among percussion instruments - the Mridangam is first "tuned" to the appropriate pitch and far more than mere drum beat, it 'accompanies' the music. It enriches and enhances the musical effect of the whole troupe. When on a solo turn, the variety of patterns and mode of rhythmic travel is a veritable feast to both the learned and the laity. There is hardly any acclaimed expert in any percussion instrument anywhere on earth who does not venerate the Mridangam as the king in the rhythmic realm.

Before entering into the topic of **achievements in the field of percussive arts** one can easily feel comfortable that at the starting point itself, long before these fifty years, the percussive art feel in India has all along been reigning supreme over all the rest of the world. On top of this supremacy the percussive art has also been dynamically growing with the times. In the history of South Indian (Karnatic) music, lot more things have happened during and after the period of the Trinity (Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Syama Sastry) than what was the case before. The vocal-violin - Mridangam format of the concert originated, grew and developed and in this period. It got firmly consolidated from about the close of nineteenth century. The leading vocalists of that period were Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan and Patnam Subramanya Iyer. The great Tamil scholar U.V. Swaminatha Iyer and Gomathi Sankara Iyer, Prof in Veena, Annamalai University have written the biography of Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan. Both the works are authentic, informative and educative. There are detailed narrations of many of the doyen's concerts - some of them in Pallavi contests, and even the wordings and structures of the various Pallavis in rare talam sung by him. Strongly enough there is no worth - while mention of the details of who accompanied him where, though it is repeatedly mentioned that Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan's Pallavis were terrors among accompanists. From these books one can infer that the accompanists of those days got eclipsed by the overpowering personalities of giants like Mahavaidyanatha Sivan. It might have been that there were no accompanists at all in some of the concerts, especially Pallavi contests. Comparing that scene with that of the current times, we can

see how the mridangist today will not turn up unless his name is prominently mentioned with due protocol in the pamphlets. This is surely a sea-change in the recognition and attention the percussionists got and are getting. **This is an achievement** in itself. Duly mentioning the names of the vocalist, violinist and Mridangist in pamphlets became an established practice only in the early decades of this century. There were advertisements in Tamil papers and weeklies about late flute T.R. Mahalingam's flute concerts with his boyhood photos but no mention of the accompanists.

There was a period when the Harikatha artists had the upperhand in the field. Krishna Bhagavathar, Panchapakasa Bhagavathar, Muthaiah (Harikesanallur) Bhagavathar, Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Saraswathi Bhai were the leading lights. It was considered mere prestigious to have Harikathas in marriages and festivals. Some of these luminaries have also been secretaries of the Thyagaraja festival at Tiruvaliyaru. Ability to give harikatha performances was considered a high qualification even to musicians. Maha Vidyannatha Iyer was an acclaimed Harikatha exponent. Even Nayana Pillai and Chittoor Subramanyam Pillai were laying their hands on this art as a status symbol.

The glory and popularity of Hankathas dwindled stage by stage reaching the abyss today. The accompanists were and are never mentioned in Harikatha pamphlets. It is only from about the day of Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar and his illustrian compeer like Flute Sarabha Sastry the accompanists were being given some recognition. The emergence of Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer and subsequently Govindaswamy Pillai raised the status of violinists to that of stars. Though Narayanaswamy Appa and Alaganambi were mridangists of reknown, it was only Dakshinamurthy Pillai who, with this disarming showmanship, raised the **status of percussionists** to the new heights. Then dawned the **golden era of percussionists** when the one and only **Palghat Mani Iyer appeared on the scene**. He rose like a colossus as the emperor among musicians, not only percussionists. **Palani Subramanya Pillai** was another star acknowledged by Mani Iyer himself.

The status of percussionists reached a peak in the second quarter of this century but it was not mere luck of the stars. There was definitely **an enormous growth in the technique of percussion**. In his own rather crude way Dakshinamurthy Pillai incorporated lot of arithmetical sophistication in Mridangam accompaniment and Tani avartanam. He was famous as a Kanjira Player too. He was also an expert in public relations and he can be called the first model for the art and craft of career building in music. Even as a boy Palghat Mani Iyer outshone all other veterans in the field and what took hours for the seniors to manoeuvre in an arithmetical voyage and arrival on time and place, took only minutes or sometimes only seconds, to the prodigal boy. His innovative rhythmic essays were a treat to the knowledgeable and at the same time were a matter for awe and wonder for the layman. He was naturally the first choice for vocalists, audiences and organizers. **Palghat Mani Iyer was a rare case of a person with fame and matching**

stuff. He and before him Dakshinamurthy Pillai were the earliest instances of percussionists to be secretaries of Thyagaraja Utsavam in Tiruvaiyaru. Palghat Mani was also the first percussionist to receive the Sangeetha Kalanidhi and Sangeet Natak Akademi awards. He was thus a prominent milestone in the advancement of the career and status of percussionists.

There have been excellent and brilliant mridanga vidwans in the subsequent period and there is no dearth of talent till today. The sophistication in mathematical twist and manipulation of Korvais and innovation in Teermanams and dramatic arrivals in Talam have all been growing with the times. During the days of Alaganambi for instance the mridangists played tani avartanam landing only on Samam throughout, irrespective of where the Eduppu of the Pallavi or Niraval was. Today intelligent landings in any odd place is very common on as for instance coinciding with the phrase Amba in Bhairavi Svarajati or landing along with the letter 'vu' of bhavulu in Endaro. Such innovations are indeed signs of growth.

The proliferation of artists of upa-pakka vadyams like Ghatam, Kanjira and Morsing is another healthy growth. These artistes are able to thrive on the concert opportunities and also in other fields like the film and TV. The successful and purposeful existence of institutions like the Percussive Arts Centre is a solid proof of due response and patronage to this branch of creative enterprise. Percussion ensembles are another welcome introduction in these 50 years. These ensembles which often include the Tabla and Pakhawaj of North India are popular in foreign countries too.

Amidst all these achievements there are some areas where percussionists of today need to look into and seek improvements. Before advent of Palghat Mani Iyer there was not a single instance of a Mridangists drawing the voice of the main artists with volume of percussive beats. The mikes have come to stay and so the obsession with many percussionists to have more volume disproportionate to the aesthetic needs in a concert. If every upa-pakka Vaadya artists is given a mike and all of them have an urge to be prominently heard and so beat their instruments drum simultaneously, what will the poor vocalist do? The optimistic duration of Tani avartanam in a concert is also a matter that needs to be studied by percussionists.

The percussion art has a glorious thick legacy in our culture. It has had a satisfactory all-round growth in these 50 years of Indian Independence. There is an encouraging environment today to herald a future of further glories to this great art of percussion.

PATRONAGE TO MUSIC - ROLE OF I.C.C.R.

Sri. J.W.Lobo

Senior Regional Director, I.C.C.R.

Seminar on "Achievements in the field of Percussive Arts over the 50 years"
Speech delivered by Sri. J.W.Lobo, Senior Regional Director, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Bangalore on 25-5-98.

Sri.S.N.Shivaswamy, Prof.T.R.Subramanyam, Justice Nittoor Sreenivas Rau and my dear friends,

At the outset, let me congratulate Bangalore Venkataram and other officers of the Percussive Arts Centre for having organised this seminar. It is very rarely that such seminars are held. I am also glad that Prof.T.R.Subramanyam (TRS) in his keynote address confined himself to the last hundred years. Because, only during the last hundred years, we have authentic documented history about our music; everywhere whatever seminars I attend, many time turn out to be unscientific because we just go on speaking about the ancient times during the Maharaja's times, just glorify our past and run down whatever that we have achieved during these years. But here is a person who has given us an authentic kind of a setup on how and where to proceed. We Indians, are known for two things. (1) Just to glorify the past. (2) Secondly to run down whatever is done at present, specially if it is done by Government Agencies. I hope this particular seminar will take an object view of what the voluntary bodies, the semi-Government organisations as well as the Government organisations have done in the field of arts for the last fifty years. Of course, the subject is very vast & within the period at our disposal, we may not be able to make a perfect assessment.

But I want to ask, as to what would have been to Indian music & dance, but for some of the Government agencies like, for example, the All India Radio (AIR). Just Imagine we did not have AIR, or the AIR did not have Indian classical music programmes; we would have definitely known, what is the real role played by AIR in the development and propagation of Indian music. There is no parallel. According to me there is no ancient, medieval or modern times. The amount of music that is broadcast by AIR, is a record in the world as such. Then, the number of people or the musicians as staff artists, as part time artists, as producers, that the AIR has employed all these years. So whenever we are assessment of the contribution of Government or Government agencies, or the voluntary agencies, we have to highlight the part played by AIR in the field of Indian music. I do not think there is any other agency in the world which has done as much as AIR. Other speakers are there associated with AIR; they may be able to give details. But as a layperson, I feel they have done a tremendous job in the development and propagation of Indian music.

But there are other agencies also in addition to AIR, that have played a role in our country during the last fifty years. As you know, we have autonomous bodies like the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sahitya Academy and others under the Department of Culture. We have in addition to AIR, the Song & Song & Drama Division in the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. We have more than 80 Indian Universities which have courses in Indian music & Dance, Indian performing arts. Then we have number of organisations which are funded and helped by Department of Culture at the Central level, State Governments and so on; they all have played a positive role in the development of Indian Culture in general and music in particular. Only thing is, when it comes to Government agencies or semi-Government agencies and so on, there is no focus. The focus is lacking, because there are multiple agencies with multiplicity of objectives all doing, some times even duplicating, and then our publicity or the way we put across the activity is lacking. Even say the agencies are divided into 3-4 ministries and that is why there is lot of wastage of resources. There is no focus, may be this is not the forum to suggest a different cultural policy for the country. Incidentally, Prof. TRS can speak anything; but I happen to be the only serving Government officer here. So I am not supposed to criticise. Personally, what I feel is, there is need for various agencies, what they do and how they could co-ordinate, because, some of the agencies are working at cross purposes. We have sangeet Natak Akademi which was doing a good job; then we started some other agencies depending as the times and then recently we also started the National Arts Centre which is getting more budget than all other agencies. They also spell out their objectives which are just those of Sangeet Natak Akademi and so on. So there is need to assess what Government agencies are doing, what they should do and so on. May be, it may not be out of place, if we think in terms of having a separate ministry instead of having all these agencies working under 3 or 4 different ministries. May be it would be better to have a common Ministry for Information, Culture and it can be targeted with Tourism, so all citizens of India know as to what Government is doing and that will avoid the duplication of cost and so on. That is in general about Government agencies.

But I have been asked to speak only about ICCR, which I am representing here. All of you may be knowing the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs with the specific purpose of "Exchange of Culture" with other peoples and countries of the world. So, our main object is exchange of culture. That is to say, send our culture abroad and receive foreign culture in India. This, we are doing in various ways. First of all, Government of India has signed cultural agreements with about 80 countries. That means, from 80 countries every year we can expect either a performing group or an exhibition or scholars to come and exhibit their talent in India. At the same time, we can sponsor our troupes or exhibitions or depute our scholars abroad to participate in seminars, conferences and so on. But many a time all these 80

countries may not be actively participating with India. Though we ourselves are very active receiving groups and so on, every year we send about 50-60 groups abroad from all over India and then receive an equal number. Then we also sponsor scholars and delegates to attend all these international seminars; So that is exchange of Culture.

Then we directly propagate Indian Culture. We have 16 Cultural Centres abroad, wherein we send teachers and directors from India for dance & Music teachers, 4 or 5 stationed at each Centre and there we conduct class for Indian music and dance. We have some very popular Centres like Mauritius where they have even Karnatak music. We have Centres at Suriname, Guyana, Fiji, South Africa, we have 2 in London, Berlin and so on at 16 Cultural Centres where we have classes in Indian music, dance, yoga, Indian Philosophy, Indian Languages and so on. There again we send India based teachers. We do not employ local teachers; we send teachers from here. We also have 25 Chairs for Indian studies abroad where we teach Indian music, Indian performing arts, Indian Languages and so on. These Chairs are placed in various Universities abroad. In addition to that, we also have, on a smaller scale, cultural programmes undertaken in different Regional Officers like Delhi at Azad Bhavan. We also organise regular programmes in Bangalore associated with the Every Friday Cultural Evening programme and so on. You may wonder as to how these people are selected, as to how we are sending troupes abroad. First of all, ICCR is not sitting in judgment about the standards of any artist or group. What we do is, we rely on the judgement of AIR where they have gradations. So, if we find there are good artists, we ask them to put an application for empanelment with us and we have about 1000-1500 artist groups including percussion ensembles on our panel. From among these Panel we are selecting troupes and send them abroad and again if some body gets an invitation to go abroad from among this panel membes, we give travel grants and so on., We are not active in the filed of developing culture and giving scholarships to Indian study. We are only exchanging culture or artists of standard. So you may ask me, at this particular seminar what special you would like to convey.

First of all, whatever may be our other drawbacks and so on I want to tell specifically to Prof.T.R.S. because ICCR played the major role or a pioneering role in improving Karnatak percussion music way back, when these Percussion Ensembles were not even heard. In 1980, we got a query from the organisers of the Shrewsbury International Youth festival in London; they wanted us to sent a group. At that time there was Mr.Lakshmipathy who was very active with the UK University Circuit; we came down and stated, let us send something special from Karnataka. We selected a group from Karnataka College of Percussion. That was in June 1980 led by Sri TAS Mani who had a group of youngsters all between the ages of 15 and 25 at that time. So that was the first percussion group that was ever sent by India for an International Festival It was a 16 member group. This went and performed there; they were all young artists stretching from Mrudangam, also had

persons playing Tabla, Pakhwaj and other instruments. It was very much appreciated and what happened then was, there was another group of youngsters who had come from Germany. They were playing Jazz and the type of music known has Emboyo. This Embryo group established contacts with our Karnataka college of Percussion and next year this group was invited by the Embryo to travel in Germany. This KCP & Embryo cut LPs., because the age of CDs had not yet come and they were a hit all over Germany; rest is history. Because you know, we know during these 18 years this KCP Ensemble, full or as individual members must have made atleast 22-25 tours abroad. Just now we heard they are on the verge of going on a tour. Why I tell you this is, the Percussion music has a lot of attraction. In the 80's this one was almost unknown and they said how can they play more than 15 minutes, that was the question they asked me. I said you see, I don't know; Last time I saw them playing for 20 minutes. But they say they can give a full concert. In 1980, these were the questions asked. Now in Bangalore I am very happy to tell you that there are 6-7 today and now another group is giving regular programmes, Percussion Ensemble programmes as groups. I am also very happy to tell that this was confined to males. There is also one Mahila Talavadya group which is directed by Vidwan H.P.Ramachar. He has a group of ladies only and this group also travelled abroad under ICCR sponsorship. I am very happy that all the Government agencies had played some role and ICCR played a role in particular in propagating Karnataka Percussion. This I think is most probably (I do not know about Delhi and Madras) Bangalore has given a lead in having Percussion Ensembles. Taking a tip from here, some-body tempted similar thing in Bombay and now we see Percussion Ensembles in Delhi and other places; they are trying to take the North Indian Instruments like Tabla and Pakhwaj and so on. They are having full concerts. We have in this, ICCR has played a role. We had also received groups from Africa, Sennagol; particularly, 7 years back we had also an International Drums Festival organised all over India and in that also local Percussion Ensembles took part and Jazz music. There are many of the Fusion groups that have come including Dr.L.Shankar with his double violin and a group from USA. They doubled themselves with local groups from Madras and they gave concerts all over India. So that we played a small part in development of propagation of Percussion music. This kind of seminar is very important. TRS has given us ideas to what extent a Percussion accompanist should go, his limits and where he as to confine himself and so on. Seminars of this kind will act as a popularising media for other groups or atleast motivate them. Three days back we had a Bharathanatyam in a National level conference with a Percussion Ensemble. Instead of Prof's narration of his experience of all of them went to canteen when Percussion Interlude was going on, in Hotel Ashok, when Bharathanatyam was going on, most of the people were chatting. The moment the Percussion Ensemble started their programme, all of them just came in to their seats and they did not go back till ensemble concluded. I think this is a good augury.

ROLE OF THE MEDIA (AIR) IN PROMOTING AND NURTURING CLASSICAL MUSIC

N.S. Krishnamurthy

Former Station Director, All India Radio

Fiftieth year of Independence is an important land-mark in the history of a nation. It is an occasion to take stock of our achievements in various fields as well as examining where we could have done better. This should also be an occasion for chalking out programmes for the future based on our past experience.

Growth of broadcasting network in our country started more or less after attaining independence. From a mere six stations we inherited after partition of the sub-continent, AIR has expanded gradually with nearly two hundred stations spread over the entire length and breadth of this vast country, primarily intended for educating, entertaining and informing a highly diverse population. It was the good fortune of AIR that a highly cultured and art loving minister Dr. B.V. Keskar, held the portfolio of Information and Broadcasting during its formative years. Thanks to his zeal and rather uncompromising approach, **great stress was laid on promoting and preserving classical music through AIR - a legacy which has been held sacred even decades after Keskar days.** Albeit, the percentage of time devoted to music has dwindled to an alarming 40 from the All India average of 67 percent of broadcast time in the earlier days, due to several factors like catering to different segments of the audience, giving publicity to the Govt. (or party) in power and so on.

Nevertheless, it has been widely accepted that **AIR rendered yeoman service in patronising and popularising classical music**, particularly after the de-recognition of Rajas and Zamindars some of whom were ardent lovers and patrons of art. Instead of being the close preserve of a chosen few, AIR brought music to the doorsteps of common listeners. On the one hand AIR affords connoisseurs of music to listen to eminent artists in the comforts of their drawing room. More importantly **it is the relatively junior artists who are benefited most by the frequent bookings AIR offers depending on their grades and thereby exposed to a wide audience.** In fact, many a talented artist has come to prominence and gained recognition in the art circles after they are spotted by AIR. No wonder then, every budding artist's first ambition is to appear before the Music Audition Board and get a decent gradirg.

The weekly National Programmes and Akashwani Sangeeth Sammelans are intended to give high quality of music to a nation wide audience and to increase awareness and appreciation of North Indian Music in the South and vice-versa. In terms of patronage to musicians, contribution of AIR is perhaps unparalleled. **Apart from payments to casual artists to perform form AIR, it is the largest employer of artists.** Nearly 1500 musicians are among the staff of AIR enjoying all the privileges of a regular Govt. servant.

Till the advent of Television and Cassette revolution in the Country, AIR was the sole electronic medium which served as the most convenient and easily affordable means of entertainment to a majority of people. Audio cassettes of all types of artists, good bad and indifferent, have flooded the market enabling people to listen to artists of their choice at a time convenient to them. The glamour of Television with a wide variety of programmes dished out, day in and day out, has further reduced listenership to radio, particularly in the urban areas. Inspite of all this, there is still a sizable segment of discerning audience who believes that there is no substitute for AIR as far as music is concerned.

Unfortunately, AIR does not seem to have taken serious note of this. Commercial revenue which can be generated only by catering to the popular tastes of public with filmy stuff seems to be the main consideration of programme planners rather than adhering to the age-old values which should never have been compromised by an institution with a track-record to be proud of.

The system of involving highly professional people introduced by Dr. Keskar for planning and producing programmes was dispensed with sometime ago due to administrative reasons. With the result, in many stations of AIR today, you do not find competent people for handling music programmes, nor there is an effective machinery for monitoring the quality of programmes. The National programmes and Sangeeth Sammelan concerts are fast losing the glamour and prestige because of a steady deterioration in the quality. There is no reason why Sangeeth Sammelan Concerts arranged before audience should be restricted to 55 minutes only. A longer duration, say 2 - 2½ hours, will allow the artist to warm up and give a better performance, from which the best portion could be selected and broadcast. Selection of artists for prestigious concerts should be purely on the basis of their current form. AIR never seemed to have evolved a definite policy on its archives. By the time AIR started doing recordings on magnetic tapes, most of the senior artists of our times like Ariyakudi, Chembai, Musiri, GNB, Madurai Mani Iyer etc., had passed their prime and their recordings available in the AIR archives cannot be considered as their best. There should be a constant endeavour for enriching the archives by recording artists when they are in top form. Compared to the modern gadgets available in private recording companies today, the equipment available in most of the stations is still archival. Worn-out tapes, speed variations due to improper maintenance of equipments etc are among the major handicaps plaguing the stations.

If AIR were to serve the noble objects of entertaining, educating and informing listeners, it has to gear up a lot, both in software and hardware.

ALL INDIA RADIO - MUSIC

Dr. K. VAGEESH

Asst. Director, Directorate, AIR, New Delhi

All India Radio has been a great patron of Art & Artistes. Many Artistes have grown with the organisation and have made name in their respective fields. They are very proud of their long association with All India Radio, a pioneering organisation in the propagation of Music.

Some of the Artistes recollect those days in the early 1950's - when they used to be invited to the studios of All India Radio, at very short notice to perform - unforgettable moments of informal approach - less formalities & of course very little payment compared to the present - The AIR network then was small - transmission hours were limited - number of artistes was small. Besides offering programmes to artistes on casual basis, AIR started employing instrumentalists in the stations depending on the requirement - Tanpura Players - Violinists - Mridangam Players - Tabla Players - Sarangi Players who came to be known as staff artistes - gradually more and more number of different categories of instrumentalists like Flute Players - Veena Players - Ghatam Artists - Khanjira Players - Phakawaj Players - were employed. Thus, most of the stations started recruiting staff artistes - which was a notable act of All India Radio in providing a source of livelihood for artistes and thus promote the Category of artistes.

The two Vaadya Vrinda Units at Delhi and Chennai (started in 1952 & 1975 respectively) provided further more opportunities for instrumentalists to join All India Radio as staff artistes. Many percussionists too, got into All India Radio. All India Radio has thus earned a name as an organisation dedicated for the promotion of art & artistes.

All India Radio has a system of grading the artistes, based on their performance. There are 4 grades i.e. 'Top', 'A' Grade, 'B' High & 'B'. The staff recruited by All India Radio are paid a handsome salary depending on their grades. With a secured job, the artistes have opportunities to perform outside AIR and even go abroad on concert tours, within the framework of certain rules and regulations.

There are 'top' grade artistes too on the staff of All India Radio.

Apart from the staff artistes, artistes are offered contracts on Casual Basis for day to day broadcast of programmes depending on their grade and requirement of the programme. There are also some restrictions on booking of artistes (outsiders) i.e. the artistes in the 'B' Grade get 3 booking a year, BH Grade - 4, 'A' Grade - 5 & Top - 6 booking a year. Fees of artistes have also been fixed with respect to their grades.

Presently, the fee fixed for different grades of artistes are as follows:-

Top Grade	-	Rs. 3,250/- fixed. (The fee was earlier Rs. 750/- before 1989 and then was revised to Rs. 1,500/- in 1992).
A Grade	-	The fee scale is Rs. 1,200/- to Rs. 3,000/- (This was earlier Rs. 350/- to Rs. 500/- and then revised to Rs. 600/- to Rs. 1,000/-)
BH Grade	-	The fee scale is Rs. 700/- to Rs. 1,100/- (This was earlier Rs. 200/- to Rs. 275/- and then revised to Rs. 350/- to Rs. 500/-)
B Grade	-	Rs. 500/- fixed. (This was earlier Rs. 100/- to Rs. 160/- and then revised to Rs. 150/- to Rs. 300/-)

By the process of regular auditions, artistes get into higher grades, based on their performance quality and thereby getting the monetary benefits too.

SYMPOSIUM ON "ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS".

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

S.N.SIVASWAMY

*(Former Station Director, AIR, and
Controller of Commercial T.V. Doordarshan.)*

In concluding this very illuminating and interesting symposium on the development of Music and the role played by All India Radio and Doordarshan in the last fifty years, I want to give you glimpses of even earlier days of All India Radio (there was no Doordarshan as yet) for I believe all the spade work done by the skeletal staff of radio stations those days laid the firm foundation of the future development of broadcasting in our country.

I joined all India Radio in the early forties when India was still under British Rule and World War II was going on. I was among the dozen or so Programme Assistants (there was no post of Programme Executive then) recruited by the Central Government to manage the programmes of the Madras and Tiruchirapalli Stations of All India Radio, the only two south Indian Stations in a small chain of radio stations operating at the time. Our Headquarters was in Delhi, where the Controller of Broadcasting, and later the Director General headed the Organization.

Besides contacting and soliciting co-operation from the artists, the Programme Assistant would fashion out ways and means of transferring their art on to an entirely new medium. So ours was a pioneering effort, picking talent, checking studio needs, spacing different kinds of singers and instrumentalists in relation to studio measurements and the Microphone, often drawing up elaborate geometric designs of such placements.

For the British Government in India, Radio as a carrier of information became very important during the II World War. They were concerned more with the mobilization of Public Support for the War. We, on the staff were inclined to be more creative, putting to use this new craft for the development of music, drama, radio features and other artistic modes.

Radio Programming had just passed the experimental stage at the time. It was at the beginning of the Century that the Radio waves had come to be used as a means of telegraphic communication. Around 1920, the Americans thought of using Radio as an entertainment and a means of mass communication of far reaching import. They were followed by other countries including Britain.

Ours was a small group, without armies of assistants seen now a days in Government Offices. No one minded hard work and long hours of duty. Counting the weekly nights spent in the office doing Civil Defence duty, we sometimes were in the office for 24 hours at a stretch. You could say we youngsters grew up with radio. Obviously we did a satisfactory job, as I cannot recall our receiving any sermon from Delhi telling us how to work nor admonition for shoddiness or inefficiency. I think the member of the Viceroy's Council in charge of Broadcasting rarely visited us, unlike in these days when the Minister is always on the move doling out instructions to stations as to how to conduct radio programmes.

The freedom of operation given to us by the British Government allowed us to experiment and evolve a system of Broadcasting suitable for our vast and varied population. The British had also inculcated in us a sense of correctness of stance, and of discipline, qualities which I think are essential for running public radio stations. Even to this day, this discipline is evident in the management processes in All India Radio like adherence to time principle, co-ordination in outside broadcasting, inter-station relays, and promptness in dealing with payments and correspondence.

For establishing this solid base for our future radio network much credit should go to the British Government's uncompromisingly strict norms applied in the recruitment of suitable persons at the initial stages of the service. To them merit rated higher than other criteria.

Coming to **Music on radio, All India Radio gave music prime place in its programme schedule.** More than fifty percent of its time was allocated to music. **Much of it consisted classical music, live and recorded.** Film music was Broadcast in discreet proportions. Folk Music collected from remote places was also there, bringing variety and popular appeal to the programmes. A new form of light musical composition, later to be termed 'Sugam Sangeet' made its appearance. There was no artist of renown in India who was not enlisted on the rolls of All India Radio.

Radio served music abundantly in those early years. All India Radio's advantage was that it could bring music into your homes. Its volume could be adjusted to suit the ears of a single listener or a group. In either case there was a touch of intimacy between the musician and the listener making a deep impact on the latter. Soon radio became a Universal phenomenon, especially with the advent of the transistor and its portability.

Radio attracted all musicians, senior and junior. They looked upon the studios as a sacred place. Even the most obdurate among them soon adapted his manners and mannerisms to conform to the requirements we have standardised. Even the youngest among us had no problem whatever in handling the most stubborn artist.

There was no Central Audition Board nor Local Audition Committees in those days. The Programme Assistant, the Director of Programmes, the Assistant Station Director and the Station Director monitored the candidate's performance live, as there was no tape recording facility at the time. As all the Officers were usually well grounded in music, known for their good taste, their decision was seldom challenged. I cannot remember any dispute arising out of auditions conducted by us, grading and classifying of artistes was done after frank discussion among ourselves. Here too we rarely came across any cases of resentment. The honesty and integrity of the concerned staff was never questioned. On the other hand we proudly watched the progress of many a young auditioned artiste, some of whom grew up into first rate concert artistes later on.

The 90-Minute concert on Saturdays was eagerly awaited by listeners as they featured the most eminent artists and accompanists of the day. There was also a **weekly one-hour concert** as well as an exclusive **Rangam-Tanam-Pallavi programme** was also occasion for the great Mudangam, Ghatam, Tavil and other talavadya experts to exhibit their prowess.

The annual flood of classic music served by All India Radio through the **relay of the year-end concerts at Madras and the Tyagaraja Aradhana Festival at Tiruvaiyaru**

continues even to this day. Later, while working at Bangalore, I had arranged for similarly relaying the Ramanavami Concerts in the City, but learnt to my dismay that the project had been abandoned once I was transferred from here. So much for the interest shown by the latter day Officers of Radio Stations in Classical Music:

Two features introduced in broadcasting after independence however merit special mention. One is the weekly National Programme of Indian Classical Music and the other, the Radio Sangeetha Sammelan whose concerts were invariably presented before invited audiences in various halls of different cities.

These enabled listeners all over the country to hear the cream of both Hindustani and Carnatic music and proved to be the best means of developing a sense of musical appreciation among all sections of listeners, young and old. Names like Bismillah Khan, Ravishankar, Hirabai Barodkar, D.V. Paluskar, Omkaranath Thakur, Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Allai Rakha, Ahmed Jan Tirakhwa, became familiar to Southern Audience, while Anyakkudi, Sammangudi, M.S. Subbalakshmi, D.K. Pattammal, Brinda & Muktha, Palakkad Mani Iyer, Palani Subramanya Pillai, Rajarathnam, Dwaram, Chowdiah - - - became popular in the North too. Many musical instruments like Esraj, Dilruba, Pakhawaj and the Percussion instrument Pung from distant Manipur were newly introduced to the South while Ghatam, Mukhaveena, Khanjira, Chandai, etc., became known in the North. Regional and Folk music came to be accepted all over the country instead of being confined to local area.

The development of All India Radio after independence saw a vast net-work converging every nook and corner of the country. Radio was called upon to take on many other duties like the presentation of aspects of development in various fields, with the result, classical music became a small component of the radio programme.

Interest in classical music is waning everyday. **Radio can still play a major role in putting classical music in its rightful place.** This can be done by opening new channels including FM which could be fully utilised for the broadcast of classical music. Let us hope that Prasar Bharathi will turn its attention to this urgent task.

Doordarshan, as many speakers have observed during today's discussions **has done little or nothing to promote public taste for classical music.** It could perhaps make a beginning by evolving a system of auditioning artists keeping in view the special needs of the medium. Being a visual medium, it cannot merely bank on the list of All India Radio's approved artists. Using the list as a base, Doordarshan might perhaps apply camera criteria to them as well. The appearance of the artists, their dress, their grooming will all matter. Facial contortion and other mannensms will be exaggerated by the camera, especially in close-ups, and artists will have to develop special attitudes necessary for facing the camera.

Doordarshan does not seem to have a music policy. This medium can and should do a lot to propagate classical music. There is no shortage of talent, but the official will is clearly lacking. **T.V. Stations should atleast allocate daily programme segments of music at convenient timing in their schedules.** Better still, **Prasar Bharathi could set apart a seperate channel, offering the best of Classical Music to the people and play its role as a true patron of art and culture.**

SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON LEATHERS AND WOODS USED IN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

N.Somanathan

*Scientist, Central Leather Research Institute,
Chennai-600 020.*

There are innumerable number of membranophones, used in this country. These instruments have a distinct name, shape, construction, technique of playing and quality of tones. Common features of these drums is that, hides and skins are used in the construction of all drums.

The type of instrument used for a specific purpose has a direct relationship with the tonal quality of the sound produced.

Drums for different purposes have different size, shape and different in construction.

In order to cope with the end use, the construction and the material used in these instruments has to be unique. "Panchamarabu" a Tamil book, which speaks about the grammar of music and dance, gives details about instruments and which leather should be used for which instruments and also the woods to be used for making the resonators.

Ancient literature shows that animal skin was employed in the vedic age. At that time probably skins were the only available material for drum-making. But even today, the Indian drum makers use skins, that too raw skins. Though there are advancements in leather, plastic and fibre science and technologies, the drum makers prefer only raw skins. They sincerely believe that nothing can replace raw skins.

Howard C Hardy et al compared the acoustical performance of bass drums with calf skin and mylar plastic. They reported that the calf skin affords a much wider range of tension adjustment as observed by audible pitch changes, thus allowing for different playing conditions.

Mechanical tests have shown that the calf skin head is superior to the plastic head in withstanding extended beating at the same position on the drum heads.

In order to know the physical and structural relation of the skin with the sound produced, the cross sectional features of leather used in different instruments were studied. A part from this some sun dried skins of common animals were also studied.

Mizhavu (goat skin), iddkkai (stomach lining), chenda (cow leather), kudamuzhuvu (deer skin)

In various skins horizontal fibres running predominantly along the scales direction and the net work structure flows perpendicular to the scales direction.

In goat skins, there is no horizontal running of fibre bundles and the fibres is in loose weaving. In sheep skin, the grain layer is comparatively larger than that of goat skin and fine fibres predominantly running along the hair follicles direction. The cross sections are plain and compact in cow calf leather. The fibres are glued together and from separate blocks in all directions.

The theory of circular membranes considers them as two dimensional stretched strings. The fundamental frequency can be related as

$$f_{01} = \frac{0.382}{R} \sqrt{\frac{T}{\sigma}}$$

where f_{01} = fundamental frequency,
 R = radius of the membranes
 T = circumferential tension/unit length
 (σ) = mass/unit area of the membrane

The pitch of the membrane, as in a stretched string depends on the size and weight of the membrane and the amount of tension it is under. The pitch lowers, as the size or weight is increased and rises when the tension is increased.

In the case of drums, the sound produced by it depends on the resonator column and the properties of leather, the loudness depends on the amplitude, energy and the intensity.

The major constituent of leather is collagen fibres. The three dimensional network of these fibres is different animals. The structure is stable up to a certain temperature and above that temperature the fibres gelatinize and the three dimensional network changes altogether.

During sun drying, due to the removal of water, the structure changes and the final leather produced, has different structures in different animals skins. The packing of fibres structures varies in the same leather, at different locations. The portion taken from the butt region is compact and the portion taken from belly region has loose structure.

The fibre bundles which forms like a string induces and help to produce more sound. When the angle of run of the fibres is varied, the effect produced is dissipated in all the directions.

Anatomical studies were undertaken in vertical, radial and tangential directions. The moisture sorption characteristics and density of the woods were also studied.

The results show that the jack wood has more fibrous structure than the other. The packing of the fibres is also very high. The pores present in jack wood is

less when compared to the other three. The pore size and distribution of the material can be inversely proportional to the modulus of the wood. the density of jack wood is also less when compared to other woods.

$$V=E/P$$

where V=velocity of sound, E=modulus, P=density

Therefore the velocity of sound will be more when the pore size and distribution and the density is less.

The moisture absorption characteristics were also good for jack wood when compared to other woods. Moisture present in the system reduced the velocity of sound.

Due to the chemical substances present in jack and neem woods, these woods were not easily affected by white ants and fungus, when compared to mango.

These studies on woods reveal that in all respects, **jack wood is superior to other woods for making the resonator and it will not produce any adverse effect on the sound produced in a musical instrument.**

In the next stage, during the manufacture of musical instruments, there are lot of problems faced by the instruments makers. For example, the non-availability of specific type of leather for making the instrument. If we take kanjira, literature shows that deer skin was used in kanjira. But currently varanus skin is used for it. But now, killing reptiles and wild animals for their skins is prohibited.

In that case what can we do for making kanjira? We definitely need a substitute for varanus skin. We need a substitute which has similar physical structure and must produce the same sound. Studies on Kanjira with different skins reveal that bandicoot skins can be used in kanjiras instead of varanus. Sound analysis of kanjiras made with varanus and bandicoot shows that the sound characteristics were similar with both skins. The feel of the instrument made with bandicoot was tested by 3 players. (one mridangam player, one kanjira player and another player who plays both mridangam and kanjira). They reported its suitability and can form a substitute for varanus skins.

Even in mridangam, previously the right head made from 3 layers of cow hide. But now the middle layer has been substituted with goat skin.

Therefore even if there is a problem in getting the skins, a **proper substitute can be found out depending on the structure of the skin.**

In conclusion, if we study the physical structural correlations and size of the instrument with sound, the available material can be made use of to solve the availability problem of materials.

LAYA IN SUGAMA SANGEETHA

(PAPER PRESENTED AT THE THALAVADYOTSAV-98 HELD ON 25TH MAY, 98)

RAGHU. N

Programme Executive

All India Radio, HASSAN - 573 201

Sugama Sangeetha is a recent nomenclature given to a newer form of music irrespective of style. It is *necessarily a regional format which highlights contemporary poets and musical trends of a particular geographical spread* and the language spoken in that area. India, being a country of diversities, nurtures a number of regional languages and hence Sugama Sangeetha of those regions.

Often, Sugama Sangeetha is also called as "light music" with the tone that it is inferior to Classical form or it is easier to present or simply it is very 'light' in its approach. Many of the music enthusiasts also feel that one who fails to learn classical music can always become a Sugama Sangeetha artist. *This misconception has crept in very recently during the cassette culture.* It is to be remembered that, music in any form is a serious affair and calls for dedication, practice and devotion. At this juncture the relation between Classical music and Sugama Sangeetha can be compared with that of Classical Science and Applied Science. Also, while Sugama Sangeetha be compared to the visible flow of a river, "Classical Values" are the under currents.

With this brief introduction, let us first note the major differences between Classical form and Sugama Sangeetha. Both the forms necessarily have Raga, Laya and Sahitya for their rendition. While *classical form puts more accent on raga giving a second place to the "text"* or the lyrical content, *Sugama Sangeetha starts from the "text" to choose the appropriate raga.* While classical form restricts itself to the rendition of a raga strictly maintaining its structure as described in classical texts, Sugama Sangeetha takes a free hand to alter the structure of the raga according to the required mood of the song as depicted in the lyrical content. In classical form the text emerges out of a "moorchana" or phrase while in Sugama Sangeetha a "moorchana" or a "sanchara" is derived to suit the needs of the "text".

Illustrations:

Classical	:	"Maayaaatheetha Swaroopini"
		"Srinathaadi Guruguho Jayathi Jayathi"
Sugama Sangeetha		"Saaku Narahari Bhavada Bavane"

Here, it is to be carefully considered that the element of "RASA" plays a major role in the formation of a composition. This point shall be dealt later.

Sugama Sangeetha is basically Lyric oriented. It is also mood/theme oriented as the contemporary poets choose varied subjects apart from BHAKTHI and SRINGARA in contrast to the Classical Form. This need not be termed as a contrast but simply an extension or a innovation. While, major of the classical compositions are philosophical, "invocations" and monologues, Sugama Sangeetha includes sociological thoughts, dialogues & groups in addition to them. This is the reason why a Sugama Sangeetha composition has an "inherent movement" in the mood of the composition. It is obvious that,

this "movement" is being contributed by the context and the power with which the poet expresses it (i.e., 'the text'). It is here that we notice the importance of LAYA and LAYAVADYA for a Sugama Sangeetha Composition.

Classical form expects a composition to be more specific about the "ANGA" OF A "TALA". Sugama Sangeetha uses the simplified "CHAPU" versions or just the beats. Here also, the Sankeema Chapu is not used as it doesn't figure in the modern NAVODAYA Style of Kannada poetry. (Here we shall restrict the discussion to KANNADA SUGAMA SANGEETHA only). However, it is not an impossibility. Breaking up nine counts in to two groups of 4 and 5 or three groups of 3 counts can also be tried accordingly writing the text.

Laya in Sugama Sangeetha serves the following purposes:

1. **Maintaining the rhythm pattern and the tempo of a composition (which is the basic essential function) and gives the raw text a lyrical jacket.**

(Illustration : Anandamaya Ee Jaga Hridaya)

2. **Highlighting the inherent accent of the text and the inherent vinyasa**

Illustration:

1. Balle Ninna Manasa Sakhee
2. Amma nimma Managalalli Kandirene Kandana

(Here in this composition though the beat pattern could have been DADRA, use of EKTAL is with a purpose. It is to high light the inherent vinyasa of the Text. The poetic expression takes a rest at the end of a lengthy line "Balle ninna manasa sakhee, Balle Ninna Kanasa". But the Pallavi doesn't stop there. It includes one more line of the same length - "Illiddoo Eilo Mana Eno Shanke Harusha". If the counting is made in groups of three, the two lines of the Pallavi of the song consume 48 counts in total. For this, if we use DADRA of six counts, both the lines of the pallavi fit into 8 Avarthas while they fit into only 4 Avarthas of 12 counts with the result, the tempo of poetic expression matches with that of the background rhythm pattern giving the listener sufficient opportunity to enjoy the lyric. Hence the inherent vinyasa of laya in the raw text should also be taken care of while rendering a Sugama Sangeetha Composition.)

3. **Highlighting the Regional style of the composition if the composition is folk based.**

(Illustration: Gamagama Gamaadastava Mallige)

This composition is based on the LAVANI (tamasha) of Maharashtra keeping in view, poet Dr. Da. Ra. Bendre's background and his taste for using folk formats in modern kannada poetry. Thus, the composition expects the use of DHOLKI and its patterns to be rendered. However, the same can be simulated on TABLA/DHOLAK compromising with the tonal quality and originality.

4. **Adding colour to the visuals that are depicted in the text.**

Illustration:

1. Kaddinagalu Kaggattalu
2. Kalmala Malmala Janjhanavendu

(In the first composition, the poet has documented the roar of rainy season personifying it as VARSHA BHAIRAVA. It is thus suggestive of SAMHARA THANDAVA OF SHIVA. While rendering the composition due care should be taken to reproduce the

said mood or the poetic expression faithfully. *This can be done by the proper usage of Rhythm Pattern and Percussion Instruments.* The most suited instruments for the context are Pakhavaj, Chande, Maddale, Manjira in addition to Tabla. Though Mridanga can replace Pakhavaj, it can not give the expected tonal depth for the composition.

As you may observe, *the percussion interludes designed herein serve their best to highlight the lyrical accent simultaneously* simulating an atmosphere in which poet has had his first experience of the context before this documentation. Here, it is expected that a "musical noise" be created in order to simulate the devastating power of flood. Hence, the melody is broken deliberately but, within the permeable limits. Success of such an attempt depends on the *creativity of the composer and meaningful rendition by the performers.*

The second composition is titled "AGNISUKTHA" and the poet is Dr. Da.Ra. Bendre. As the poet hails from Vedic background, and the title is also suggestive of prayers to AGNI - the Fire God, the text puts a condition that the tune should make the listener feel the composition in the backdrop of some vedic ritual say, a HOMA or YAJNA. Naturally, VAISHVANARA GAYATRI is used as an interlude along with the sounds of PAKHAVAJ which would produce the congenial atmosphere as expected by the poet. The composer does this musical translation of the untold aspects in the poetry. The beat pattern of PAKHAVAJ takes us back in time and gives the sufficient tonal depth to suit the abstract nature of VEDIC HYMNS.

The above illustrations clarify the role of LAYA in Sugama Sangeetha

The next point is the use of LAYAVADYA in Sugama Sangeetha. Contemporary Kannada Sugama Sangeetha uses TABLA as the main percussion support irrespective of style of music whether it is Carnatic or Hindustani. In addition, Dholak, Manjira, Moraccos, Drum pads, slap sticks, congo drums, bango etc., are used as per the need. This is only to experiment with the TONAL HARMONY. However, Sugama Sangeetha can also be rendered with the help of Tamboor, a percussion support and a stringed accompaniment for melody support giving a satisfying experience.

The reason as to why Mridanga is not being used for a Sugama Sangeetha rendering is not very clear. There are instances that the famous Sugama Sangeetha singer of yester years P. Kalinga Rao used Mridanga on many occasions as observed in some of the recordings of All India Radio. One of the reasons may be because, use of Mridanga introduces a rigid classical flavour to the composition there by restricting all other concepts involved in a sugama sangeetha composition. However, in commercial recordings Mridangam is used as an effect than a main percussion instrument for Sugama Sangeetha. Among the other reasons, it may be the prejudice about the "Form" (i.e., Sugama Sangeetha).

Another important fact that can be observed is that Hindustani System of music has always recognised semi-classical forms like Ghazals, Thumris, Tappas, Kajari, Chaiti, Bhajan, Natya Sangeetha, Dhun, Geeth etc., wherein there is a natural need for improvising the folk styles of percussions playing to achieve the regional flavour. This not so in

case of Carnatic Classical Music. Though Javali, Padam, Thillana, Devaranama are treated as semi-classical forms the classical performer doesn't experiment to have improvised rhythm patterns. One will not be able to say whether this attitude is out of prejudice or fear of adverse comments by the fellow musicians.

LAYA & RASA:

Discussion on LAYA will not be complete without referring to the relation between LAYA & RASA. The subject becomes more and more complicated when we try to assess this relation as "RAS Ā ANUBHAVA", till date, is considered to be purely a subjective aspect. However, one can not deny the contribution of LAYA to achieve a "RAS Ā NUBHAVA". There are a number of theories regarding "RASA" in verbal literature and it will be a total deviation to get to those details at this juncture.

Any musical composition is intended at "RAS Ā NUBHAVA". This is influenced by the RAGA, SAHITYA and LAYA. While Sahitya provides the verbal clues for RAS Ā NUBHAVA, RAGA and LAYA form the Non-Verbal counterparts. Raga creates the necessary mood. *Laya and proper use of Layavadyas give colour to the lyrical accent* and the mood. RAGA, SAHITYA and LAYA together achieve a "Musical Resonance" so as to provide the "RASIKA" the much needed RASANUBHAVA.

While structure of a raga is of prime importance in bringing out a rasa in a particular composition, Laya is supplementary to this endeavour.

Adbhuta, Raudra, Veera, Bhaya and Bheebhatsa Rasas expect a fast tempo, loud and harsh sounds as the case may be, Karuna, Srngara Rasas expect the percussion to be more soft and silent.

However, Hasya Rasa is more contextual and hence is necessarily a visual. Hasya Rasa in a musical composition can be attributed more to Sahitya (verbal part). How far the non verbal part contributes to Hasya rasa is a subject of discussion yet.

SUMMING UP :

Actually, Sugama Sangeetha is more a *team work oriented*. The percussionist should *design newer rhythm patterns* to make each composition different. The background score should be suitably designed to maintain and uplift the inherent mood of the composition. The singer should necessarily understand the flashes that are given by the percussionist at the required points and sing accordingly. For all this, the performances should be *well rehearsed before hand* in contrast to a classical performance where in the MANODHARMA of the singer takes an upper hand to that of the accompanists.

Indian Classical Musical Forms are always MEDITATIVE in nature. This is because of the great heritage of Philosophy, our land has nurtured. Sugama Sangeetha emerges more on a sociological level. It is an endeavour to generalise all the individual experiences of Composers, Performers and Listeners giving the composition an elastic frame work.

Once, the famous Film Music Director G.K. Venkatesh asked me "Tell me, which did start first - is it the Nada or the laya?". It was very much unexpected and I couldn't answer at once. Smilingly he answered-" It is the laya first. The human life starts with the beat of the heart. It is the laya in the end also", he intended pun. This says the importance of Laya in a nut shell.

"UNIFORM PERCUSSION NOTATION SYSTEM AND ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE TEXTS, PUBLICATIONS" - A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

PAPER PRESENTED ON 25.5.98

H.S. SUDHINDRA

*Mrudanga Vidwan and Convenor,
Youth form, Art Centre*

We are conducting a programme on the **Achievements and Growth** made in the field of percussive Arts over the past 50 years. I am presenting a paper on "**UNIFORM PERCUSSION NOTATION SYSTEM AND ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE TEXTS, PUBLICATIONS**". This is only a preliminary survey. This paper deals with the improvement and growth that has taken place in the field of Percussive Arts with respect to notation system.

Sound in general can be either noise or music. Audible frequencies which are pleasing to hear may be termed as **Naada** or **Musical Sound**. The musical sound consists of different swaras. These swaras are confined to different octaves. Each swara is identified by its sthaana, which is given a particular name. This is the basis for evolution and formulation of a written text for music which was later called **Notation**. Notation is a system of symbols and signs.

The Concept of Notation system did exist even during the times of Natya Sastra. People often forget that every music Grantha has a Taala Adhayaaya. The contents of the Thaala Adhayaayaas are not clearly known because of the following reasons:

- (a) Non-technical persons (Non-Percussion Artists) could not have understood this.
- (b) The persons who understood the literary language, that is the language in which this was written, did not know the performing aspects.
- (c) The persons who knew percussion did not know the literary language.

In Music, the song has a text (Sahithya) and this text has a meaning. However, there is no meaning for mnemonics (in the literary sense) as a language, but still the language is conveyed through musical strokes. This language is universal and is enjoyed by most. Since this is a monotone instrument everyone cannot appreciate. Even amongst the elite class, it was believed that percussive arts were not comprehensive for higher studies. However, such things are fast vanishing and there is definitely scope for higher studies in percussive instruments like Master's, M.Phil, Doctorates etc. Over the past 50 years, this is strongly brought into lime light and proved beyond doubts.

A number of students are learning various percussive instruments and it is very ideal to put the lessons in writing. This is highly necessary, for the following reasons:

- (a) Retentivity
- (b) Authenticity
- (c) Useful for an artist himself to recollect a complex korvai he has formed, after some years. We have already lost many moharas and other technicalities of olden days. In fact, the Mohara was being formed from sama. (Now we have a method of playing a korvai from sama to eduppu).

Most of our earlier percussion artists in the field were illiterate though highly cultured. No notations were available due to this factor. However, art was propagated more through "**Karna Parampara**" or "**Guru Shishya Parampara**". When the question of retentivity and authenticity arose, writing of "sollus" became essential. Probably no written material or script was given to the disciple before or after teaching. As said earlier, when the question of retentivity arose, disciples gave a thinking to write, much against the wishes of their Gurus. For example, in music, if this were not to be the case, none of the trinity's compositions would have been available today but for their disciples taking interest in writing and preserving the texts with notation. Even early in this century those copies were restricted for a selected few. Much to the opposition of the giants in the field, books were printed. We can recollect the works of Sri Ranga Ramanuja Iyengar. There was a time when 10 Keertanas were not available together in printed text. He was bold enough to print 100s of Keertanas in a series of books titled **Kriti Mani Maalai**. He was criticised as commercial minded and attempted cheap popularity. However, today we have a lot of Keertanas authored by many Vidwans and **Kriti Mani Maalai** has become a reference Manual.

Over the past 50 years a lot has been done in the percussive arts too, with respect to the notation system. Various authors have written useful texts. I have come across 14 such books written in English, Telugu and Tamil. There may be many books which I am not aware. If there are any, kindly let me know so that it could be later added to the list. The books available are read out now along with year of publication, title and language.

Name of the Publication	Year of Publication	Name of the Author	Language of the Text
Mridanga Paadabhodhini	1965	T.R. Harihara Sharma	Tamil
Mridanga Tatvam	1966	Dhamala Ramamurthy	Telugu
The Art of Mridangam	1969	T.R. Harihara Sharma	English
The Art of Playing Mridangam	1969	Tinniyam Venkatarama Iyer	English
Mridangam Tatvam	1973	Dhamala Ramamurthy	English
Muktaya Suthra Bashyam	1973	Dhamala Ramamurthy	Telugu
Mridanga Bhodhini	1976	Mahadevu Radhakrishna Raju	Telugu
Vadhyar Marabu	1987	Dr. A.N. Perumal	Tamil
Sangeeta Akshara Hridaya	1988	S. Rajagopala Iyer	English
The Art of Drumming	1988	V.P.K. Sunderam	Tamil
Sogasuga Mridanga Talamu in Three parts		T.A.S. Mani	English
Mridanga Swabhodhini	1991	Mangudi Dorairaja Iyer	English & Tamil
The Rhythmic Principles and practice of South Indian Drumming	1994	Trichy Sankaran	English
Mridanga Paadamurai		Mylattor Swami Iyer	Tamil

Due to language problem I could study only the English texts. Because of time constraint I shall refer out the notation systems of one or two books. I shall also refer out the highlights of other texts.

"The art playing Mridangam" by Sri Tinniam Venkatarama Iyer. As illustrated by the above author, the basic lesson **Tha, Dhi, Thom & Nam** are represented by KRDN respectively. He clearly states that Tha and Dhi are nonvibrating strokes whereas Thom & Nam are vibrating strokes. The letter K also stands for Ku, Ka and Ki, the letter 'R' also stand for Ri & Tha, the letter D also stands for Ja. The Kaarvai is represented by a small ellipse. (Kaarvai is nothing but "the rest" or "silence") The author has used four small ellipses written to show a kaarvai of four. The author has excellently compared the basic syllables Tha, Dhi, thom & Nam with that of the music Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma.

For ex:	K - K K	R - R R	D - D D	N - N N
	Sa - SaSa	R - Ri Ri	Ga - Ga Ga	Ma - Ma Ma

and so on.

Further, he has used 'T' for representing Tha on the right side, 't' for representing Ta on the right side, 'M' for representing Dheem on right side and 'C' for representing Chapu or Tham on the right side. The simultaneous play of the syllabus are denoted by subscripts. The left hand syllables are written as subscripts and the right hand syllables as main letters. For Eg : C_D - which means Chapu + thom = Dhom.

The author has clearly mentioned about the notations for Trnkalam. The Jathis, Tekas, Mohras, and Korvai are clearly dealt with for the 7 basic thalas.

"The Art of Mridangam" by T.R. Hariharan Sharma. The author introduces that the Mridangam has the capability to produce 7 distinct musical tones varying in pitch, resonance, timbre and tonal qualities. The 7 fundamental syllables are termed as Tha, Dhi, Thom, Nam, Ta, Chapu and Dhin. These are referred to as major syllables while Ki, Ka, Dhim and Tham are referred to as Minor Syllables. A dot is used to denote a Kaarvai. Absolutely no abbreviations are used for any syllables. It is very easy to read the syllables in its true form and can be practically played by looking at the book. The author has designed notation system in a very simple manner.

"Mridanga Swabhodhini" by Mangudi Dorairaja Iyer. The author has clearly given a very simple notation system. Once again there are no abbreviations are used. The notation can be read, understood and practically be executed on the mridangam by looking at the book. The author also attempts to give a picture of accompaniment. He has chosen Khanda Jaathi Ata Thala Varnam in the Saurashtra Ragam. The notation first consists of Swaras, under which Sahitya is written. Below this the Mridangam syllables or sollus are clearly illustrated.

"Mridangam Tatvam" by Dhamala Ramamurthy. The author explains a lot of technical terms and the theory regarding Mridangam. As for as the notation system is concerned, the book clearly indicates various types of Gumkis with notations. The Gumki varieties are clearly shown in the Photographs. The book is quite voluminous as the notation system for Jathi, Tekaversas, Mohra, Korvai for all the 35 thalas are in detail. The notation consists of Greek Alphabets etc. for notating. The notation system is quite advanced.

"Sogasuga Mridanga Thalamu" by T.A.S. Mani. Once again the notation system is straight, easy and can be executed by looking at the book. No abbreviations have been used. The book has been designed with special reference to Karnataka State Secondary Education Board Tala Vadya Examination. The book has been brought out in three volumes.

"The Rhythmic Principles and Practice of South Indian Drumming" by Trichy Sankaran, This is the latest book available today on Mridangam. The notation system is very highly taken care of. The author has gone to the extent of notating in the western system. The notation syllables has various abbreviations and the Gumki is also abbreviated.

As clearly observed from the above study each author has used his own notation system. For eg: The Pharan "Tha Ka Tha Ri Kita Taka" is read as "Dhi Gu Tha Ri Kita Taka". Ta Tha Cha Tha Kita Teka are pronounced in different ways, but when played all have the same fingering. When compared with the non-percussion notation systems, however, different the styles are, the notation system is the same. There is definitely the uniformity in them. Anybody who writes a book in Music i.e. Non-Percussion will follow the rules of notating. It should not be a very difficult to establish uniformity in writing notation for percussions. Big volumes can be brought with uniform notation systems. All the finer points of each publication can be suitably collected compiled and edited. It is open for further discussion. It is high time to establish a uniform notation system. A uniform notation system is that which would be executed easily by all in the field.

Finally, uniform notation system is very essential for the following reasons:

- (1) Preserving art through Textual material
- (2) For propagation of art
- (3) As a teaching material for students
- (4) This is an era of documentation
- (5) For retentivity
- (6) For recordings and symphony's.

The essential contents of a uniform notation system

- (1) It should represent the strokes and Kaarvai
- (2) It should represent the Marga
- (3) Graha should be indicated
- (4) Soft, Hard and vibrating strokes should be mentioned
- (5) Supporting strokes on the left should be taken care of
- (6) Gumki should be taken care of
- (7) Number of times a particular phrase to be repeated should be mentioned
- (8) The Kale should be represented
- (9) The Ghana & Naya (Vallinam & mellinam in Tamil) should be mentioned
- (10) Thala and Anga should be clearly stated.

This is only a preliminary survey. We request the Vidwans, Vidushis, students, and others to supplement us with any other information they have. We would be very grateful to them. We would like to publish this as a written material, so that further debate can be had on this. A consensus may be arrived at so that it could be agreed by most of the Vidwans and Vidushis. We seek your response in this context.

I am grateful for the opportunity given to me by the Percussive Art Centre to conduct a preliminary survey on uniform percussion notation system and analysis of the publications.

ELECTRONICS & MUSIC

Arun Sukumar

Percussion & Rhythm Programmer

Today's world is known for its technological advancement and hence our era is known as 'electronics era'. No wonder, the field of music has also been influenced by this new change. The impact of advancements in electronics on the field of music is vital. In a way, they have revolutionised the field of music. Hence a fine blend of traditionalism and modernism in music seems to be the dream of every aspiring musician in recent years.

Rhythm composer (R8 - Mark II Ronald) - which has created a new wave in the field of percussions - is a device which has the sounds of 500 different percussion instruments fed into it as an in-built facility. These sounds, available in the **rhythm composer** can be manipulated and utilised according to our needs in terms of Thalas and different rhythm patterns.

Digital Sampler (MS I Ronald) - is a device through which one can record or sample any acoustic instrument. The recorded sound can be adjusted to any pitch and swaras and could be availed for any purpose. For instance, in the advanced versions of digital samplers, if we record a stroke of Santoor, this sound can then be changed, stretched and used to necessary swaras. Hence recording a single stroke will enable us to have the sound of Santoor in the required pattern without actually recording the pattern live. The tonal quality of this recorded material is said to have more richness than original recording.

In rhythm composers, we have a facility MIDI (Musical interface - digital interference) through which the sound of any percussion instrument could be fed into the device. Using this facility, I have sampled Mridangam (through digital sampler) and fed into this device. This sound can later be utilised when and where we need, and in whichever rhythm we like.

In the latest technology available, many more such miracles can be worked out. Hence can we predict times when traditional instruments are entirely replaced by their electronic counter parts? May not be so, because these electronic devices are dependent on traditional instruments and hence cannot lead independent lives. One more drawback is that these devices are quite time-consuming. More importantly, the **real** experience which one gets through live traditional instruments cannot be matched with any alternatives. Nevertheless, the increasing domination of electronic devices in the field of music cannot, at any cost, be overlooked.

DEMONSTRATION OF IMPROVED TAALMALA (ELECTRONIC TABLA)

G. Raj Narayan

Radel Electronics Pvt. Ltd.

The electronic tabla "TAALMALA" was invented in 1987 by G. Raj Narayan, and has been in popular use by many North Indian musicians since then. Many musicians and Universities have also been using this instrument to serve as practice aids.

With improvements of technology and the consequent availability of high-tech miniaturized micro-controllers at affordable prices, it has now become possible to provide improved features while at the same time achieve better performance with reduced power consumption. Utilizing these new technologies, improved models of the Taalmala have been continuously developed. The recent models launched in March 1998, the CT-24DX and the MT-24DX are based on PCM wave synthesis technology that utilizes samples of the actual sound of the tabla. These instruments were demonstrated at the Percussive Arts Centre on 26th May, 1998.

The main features of these instruments are as follows:

1. It is more compact than the earlier models and hence more convenient to carry around.
2. It produces a true-to-life sound of the tabla which can be tuned over a range of more than one octave.
3. It can play any of the 24 built-in "thekas" at any speed from "ati-vilambit" to "ati-drut".
4. It can change taals while playing, the new selection taking effect automatically at "SAM".
5. Both the models have 24 built-in "thekas" catering to classical and light classical music.
6. It can operate on either AC Mains (220V or 110V) or on a set of six batteries. It can operate for about 100 hours on batteries.
7. The MT-24DX has provision for being programmed by the user to play any new "theke" created by the user. It also has editing facility to make minor alterations to the built-in "thekas".

The above features make the new Taalmala very attractive for performers and learners of Hindustani classical music. This enables them to practice with true-to-life tabla accompaniment at their will at any time of the day or night.

50 years-MUSIC THEN AND NOW

There will always be a group of committed listeners and performers who will refuse to compromise on traditional values.

Padma Vibhushan Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer

Songs about the glory of India and the joys of Independence were on everybody's lips in August 1947. Today we wonder: have we really achieved freedom? Politics, social patterns, attitudes and values have suffered a drastic change since then. And although I believe that **Carnatic music has not only survived but developed in many new directions**, I see also the shifting perspectives and goals.

Before the 1930s, musicians performed before small groups of 200 to 300 listeners. The microphone brought a revolution. The singer do not have to develop a voice of full-throated resonance any more. Thousands could hear his murmurs and croons. But amplification has been at the cost of tonal clarity, as also of depth, weight and vocal power. The mridangam is a victim too. Restraint robs it of natural force and lucidity. **This new style of music may please the ear, but cannot haunt the mind.**

The amplifier's feedback can be a hindrance on the stage. So it is for listeners assaulted by the gigantic speakers in the hall that convert music into noise. The distortions can be minimised by placing small speakers at regular intervals to project more even sound. Why, the bell-shaped speakers of the early days, placed above the *pandal*, were far better than the models that we have now.

Once Budalur Krishnamurti Sastrigal and I sat on the bridge across the Cauvery in Tiruvaiyaru to see how well we could hear the flute recital of Palladam Sanjiva Rao at the high school venue nearby. Sanjiva Rao's lengthy *mandra* (lower octave) phrases were nectar from the heavens. *Mandra sthayi* has gone out of vogue. **We have neither the vocal strength nor the taste for it any more.**

In the past, Carnatic music was **nourished by the Nagaswaram tradition**. As a child I followed the pipers through the four streets round the temple in the procession of the deities. Now and then, the pipers would stop and ruminatively elaborate a *raga*. The crowds would throng to worship the gods as well as to listen to the music. The pipes seemed to call the people to come and cleanse their souls in prayer and music. The brothers Kiranur, Tiruppamburam, Tiruvizhimizhalai... Mannargudi Chinnappakkiri, Chidambaram Vaidyanatha Pillai, Rajaratnam Pillai, Viruchami Pillai... they were giants. I wonder how many can recognise their names today. **That kind of expansive, contemplative music has vanished.** I can still hear their morning ragas - Kedaram, Bilahari, Saveri, Dhanyasi, Nattakurinji - as the deity was taken to the nverside *mantapam* for the *tirhvari* ritual; and the

evening strains as he rode the silver chariot back to the sanctum. Today the children of those pipers have exchanged their family art for office jobs.

I will concede that present-day singers have developed a better voice culture than in our times. They have also developed better *sruti* alignment. Of course many of them are inaudible without the mike. But you will say I fault this because I belong to the old school!

The growth of music depends as much on the listeners as upon the artists. Nowadays people do not have the time or the temperament to savour four-to-five-hour-long concerts. But they know much more theory, which makes them formidable. It is very difficult to satisfy them. What a contrast to the old-timers who often identified Kambhoji not by name but by a well-known song in it as the 'Sri Subrahmanyaya namaste *raga*!' The credit for cultivating greater knowledge among listeners should rightly go to Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar. He not only gave us the concert format that we follow now, but also popularised many ragas and a variety of *kritis* in them.

The old listeners had patience and discipline. When an organiser found someone gossiping in my concert, he literally dragged him by the ear and threw him out of the hall. Once when I found some Mylapore advocates chatting in the last row I asked them: "Would you let me talk in your court room?" No more trouble! At the least sign of inattention my guru, Sakharama Rao, would simply pick up his gottuvadyam and stage a walk-out. He did not tolerate any insult to the art he worshipped.

Today performers not only tolerate indiscipline, they also rely more on the razzle-dazzle of virtuosic skills, which do not permit depth. I will not mention names - no, I do not want stones thrown at me! But listeners have been trained to appreciate ragas sung in ways difficult to identify or understand. This trend is lauded as clever. People have come to believe that real enjoyment comes from what they do not understand. They crave for ragas "new" and "rare", but so limited that there is no doing anything with them except racing up and down the scale. I have never indulged in such tricks.

A regrettable modern tendency is to burst into applause for every little thing. This creates the illusion that the success of a concert is to be gauged by the volume and frequency of the applause. Determined performers work towards a crescendo of superfast *swaras* tagged with the "tadingination" - in other words, arranging *swaras* to imitate drumbeats. Laya wizard Dakshinamurti Pillai would exclaim even in those days: "Leave drumming to us! Sing from the soul!" But from Kanchipuram Nayana Pillai to the Alathur Brothers there were those who indulged in fireworks. Today this has become the rule rather than an exception. The music and the applause are equally mechanical. Once in

Bangalore, when violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman and I traded *kalpanaswaras* in fast and slow speeds, stimulating each other to plunge more and more into Anandabhairavi, finding *poruttams* each more beautiful than the one before - **there was no need for any climax** of calculated rhythms. And the hall was filled with an exhilaration beyond thoughts of applause. My friend and contemporary the late **Musiri Subramanya Iyer** used to be so lost in *bhava* that he never thought of evoking any response.

The *brika* is another dangerous device. Its glamour is often mistaken for grandeur. I would say that no attention getting device has lasting value. Music must not draw attention to skills; it must make performer and listener forget themselves.

Sometimes I feel that not having a good voice is an asset to the Carnatic musician. It impels him to Herculean efforts to grasp something beyond his reach - to explore new, original, fascinating territories. Of course, now you think I am talking about myself. May be I am.

There are many changes for the better. There are more *sabhas*, sponsors, government support and more musicians. Artists enjoy financial security, a far cry from the days when parents were afraid to get their daughters married to musicians. Yes. I speak from personal experience.

Another tremendous step forward is the emergence of women as equals of men in the male-dominated field. With exception of the Dhanammal family, women musicians sang a string of songs exactly as they had been taught. They did not attempt much improvisation of *raga* and *swara* they avoided the challenge of the *ragam tanam pallavi*. With the advantage of naturally sweet voices, women are now overtaking men in each one of these departments.

Concerts today have team spirit. Instrumentalists have made great strides. The violin have become a solo instrument on par with the veena and the flute. New instruments like the mandolin and the saxophone are crowd-pullers. We have to wait to see if they will endure.

The *rasik* has greater variety and choice than everbefore. **But there is less diversity in another area.** In my time you could say this boy was trained by Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, this man is the disciple of Ariyakudi, and so on. But today every youngster sounds the same. Their concert pattern, manner of *kriti* tradition are all the same. They are all one even in refusing to descend from the higher octave until they extract applause.

The reason is that they are no longer merely the *sishtyas* of this or that guru, but of the cassettes that flood the market. Nor has criticism developed as a constructive guide. Critics are more interested in attacking established artists to produce copy that sells.

Our age has seen a proliferation of musical compositions. The lesser known *kritis* of the great masters have been discovered and polished. And **each day brings a new composer to light**. The old endures because it is steeped in the essence of the *ragabhava*. And time will decide the fate of the new. I will say that Papanasam Sivan's songs are not skeletal verses; they are filled with life-giving melody.

Staying with the guru for years and absorbing music by listening as well as learning is **no longer feasible**. Now we have institutions where music is taught to groups of students in one-hour, slots-a waste of energy and money. In Thiruvananthapuram, where I was Principal of the Sri Swati Tirunal College of Music. I devoted a whole morning to a class, attended to the needs of each individual student and finally sang the whole piece so that they got the whole picture of what they were learning in parts. I find that **those who learn from class held in the home of vidwans show better results** than government college students.

It cannot end without repeating my conviction **about teaching methods**. You know that children who learn in the Montessori method have a better grasp of the subject than these who are forced. They learn spelling and grammar after becoming familiar with the language. **Similarly, exercises in the scales like *sarali* and *janta* must be taught after the child learns little, simple songs**. Then he will learn more, enjoy more.

With all these developments in the art and its sponsorship, why is it that the impact of present-day music is confined to **concert time**? Why does not it linger in the mind for days after? One reason is that there is **too much of it easily available round the year**. You do not have to wait for it and seek it as in the past.

Perhaps the problem has to do with a fast lifestyle, one that hankers after novelties and innovations all the time. It lacks the perseverance and discipline on which the creative arts thrive. But **Carnatic music will retain its grandeur and depth** despite temporary trends. There will always be a group of committed listeners and performers who will refuse to compromise on values. It will **remain a small minority**. So what? The classical arts have **never had mass appeal**.

[Courtesy: Frontline, August 22, 1997]

THE MARCH OF PERCUSSION

Mahamahopadhyaya Prof. Dr. R.Satyanarayana

PERFORMANCE

The growth of music in post-independence India is also the growth of its organ, the art of percussion. Hence the question, in what ways and how much has the art of percussion grown in the last fifty years is pertinent for an overview of the cultural growth of India during this period. Post-independent India has witnessed many dramatic changes in population, sociocultural milieu, growth in technology, erosion of traditional, spiritual and other values which characterised it in the past. Some of these changes are global and are reflected in India too. This may truly be called the age of speed. Speed in travel and communication has shrunk this planet to a small village; things which were the prerogatives of the privileged, the aristocratic and the rich are now readily available - indeed in a surfeit - to the very poor. To some extent, this has helped in the erosion of the values; for the valuable should be attained only with effort and responsibility. Tragically, this seems to be true of our Independence too.

One of the aims and consequences of democracy is the right of equal opportunities. This is adequately realised in the art of percussion, too. The tremendous growth in the learning, performing and listening in excellent, sophisticated percussive performance in post Independence India is a witness of this; even some two or three generations ago, learning and playing the few percussive instruments then known were restricted to a few of a minor caste which carried a stigma of social and religious inferiority. The illiteracy of their exponents allowed only a low profile of the art in presentation and scholarship. The main performer felt invariably superior and condescending and shared with them, when it suited them, only a tiny fraction of their remuneration (which was after all, only meagre in those days). These exponents had more often than not suffer humiliation at the mystique of *taala* and *edupu* which the main performer flaunted. The percussive performer had to wait for the chance of his '*tani aavartana*' (if at all granted), to show his skill and resources and if gritty enough, to attempt a (camouflaged) hit back. Exclusively percussive ensembles were entirely unknown. He could learn making and playing the instrument (only to accompany) only by oral transmission by his guru as apprentice. It is tribute to the irresponsibility of genius that artists such as Azhaganambi, Dakshinamurthi Pillai and Palghat Mani grew into colossuses in such an oppressive atmosphere which was dominated by convention than original thinking and free endeavour.

Now the scene has dramatically changed. The percussion practitioner is mostly an educated - even academic - person with an informed professionalism, and is drawn from all social strata, who has an attitude of mutual tolerance, if not understanding and of peaceful co-existence towards his fellow practitioners. He has an analytical and academic approach towards his instrument, performance

and music in general. He is aware of his position in society and of his obligations. He and the main performer try to develop mutual understanding, respect, co-operation and sharing of information: he receives a proportion of the total remuneration which was beyond the wildest dreams of his predecessors some three generations ago. He receives social and cultural recognition due to an artist and as an honorable member of the social group. Indeed, many persons who are highly employed in various walks of life take up percussion as a profession. Another noteworthy change is the participation of women as percussionists successfully. Bhagyalakshmi in Kerala and Prema in Karnataka commenced their trend more than sixty years ago, it is true, but they were rarities at that time. Whole ensembles of women percussionists, not to say female *dolu* performers no longer cause raised eyebrows today.

As part of global expansion of Indian music, its percussion is now international in scope. Its masters go abroad to teach and perform and are integral to any music delegation from India. Their interactions with their western compeers, especially in Jazz, have produced interesting experiments.

Indian percussion experts have now earned honour at par with the main performers as for example, in the awards made by the President, Central and State Governments. Veteran percussionists have adorned the presidential chair at numerous, prestigious, music conferences throughout India and have enjoyed the associated honours. Seminars, Symposia, Workshops and other academic conclaves devoted solely to the elucidation of theory and practice of percussion have become common place. There are now in South India periodicals devoted exclusively to this art. Books and booklets as well as a journal relating to the art of percussion are being regularly published. National and State level awards are instituted for percussion masters. Biographers of the maestros of yesteryears are being published. **The work being done by the Percussive Arts Centre of Bangalore in this direction deserves a special mention.**

The academic status of this art has greatly improved : it has a board of examination at the secondary education level which formulates and regulates the curriculums for various grades , university music and dance departments invariably include a percussionist and offer systematized syllabi, examinations and degrees and even doctoral awards for research work. Many percussive instruments have received exact scientific investigation including acoustic characterisation, materials etc. Percussive education is now successfully institutionalised because the old *gurukula* system is no longer functioning effectively. A number of institutions devoted to the teaching of only percussive instruments is founded and managed by reputed performers. The percussive instrumental repertoire is being sought to be enlarged by adoption and adaptation of folk and exotic instruments, e.g. *gettuvaadya*. Further exploration in this direction would prove rewarding. The art is being enriched with the infusion and mystification. Distinctive styles and techniques in performance are emerging and are sustained.

Awaited performance

Impressive as the foregoing performance sounds, there is no room for complacency if the percussive art hopes to catch up with contemporary needs, aspirations and progress. So it has to perform much more. Some ideas may be indicated here.

It is true that most percussive concert instruments are now in a high state of perfection, but it is ponderable that we have yet to come up with an entirely a new, modern creation. A circular thought is relevant at this point : does evolution progress because of the conscious or subconscious awareness and the internal pressure of a need, or by chance mutation? Or, has classical Indian music reached a point of complacent monotony, sterile of new creative impulses in its percussive instrumentalism? Would the conscious invention of a new instrument endowed with the strength of general, spatiotemporal acceptance lead it to a new direction, a new destination? Such a creative endeavour must garner both from the future and from the past. Reconstruction and resurrection from the distant, archaic past and adaptation to the present would prove as important and effective as invading the future. Let it be remembered that more than thirty different percussive instruments are found described in meticulous detail in the ancient **shastra** treatises. Many of these are romanticized in medieval sculptures.

Let us think of an immediate need : one of the irritating weaknesses of our major percussive instruments is the **instability in respect of the reference pitch**. An urgent need is the development of a device with reasonable staying power. Thinking of the **shastra** brings fourth another idea for expansion : ancient treatises describes as many as 84 techniques of play with single and both hands, on both drumheads to most of which the modern percussionist is a stranger. Serious and systematic research in this area is an urgent desideratum if we really desire to pursue excellence, perfection and the enlargement of technical resources. Another equally important area demanding systematic endeavour is preservation, perpetuation, analysis and characterisation of styles. It is necessary to devise teaching methods and aids to ensure these. An immediate need in teaching and communication is the development of an adequate, graphical notational system for teaching and performance in percussion conforming to international standards and requirements. I feel that the academically oriented minority of the percussive fraternity could and should enlarge their resources vastly by availing of the methods, devices and **formulary of prastaara** in respect of **muktaayas, teermaanās** and other calculative applications, instead of depending on 'divine' inspiration or hit - or - miss attempts. **Shastra** is not merely a collection of past obsolescences : it is also the codification of the thought, experience and wisdom of the past in solving problems and evolving practices which transcends specific space-time frames. An essential need of contemporary Indian percussion is a proper alignment to the true **shastra**. For example, the **shastra** classifies **mrīdaṅga** players into **vaadaka, mukhari, bhaandika** and **geetaanuga** to

provide for various situations and exigencies. The last is defined as one who closely parallels the rhythmic structure of the song being performed in respect of (reference) pitch, phrasing, accent, position of attack, *anga* divisions of the *taala* etc. Such a percussionist obviate a question which is often raised (by the uninitiated) as to what his role is in a concert. Let *shastra* knock on the door of every enquiring percussionist: manuscript libraries and private collections in India and elsewhere boast of numerous excellent treatises on *taala*. Why is it that there are so few publications on *taala* of ancient or medieval works, critically edited, competently translated and interpreted in such a way as to embrace the performer?

It is true that our forefathers have bequeathed to us near perfect percussive instruments and have left precise descriptions making them. It is nevertheless, equally true that no two *mridangas* are alike in quality even when manufactured by the same person or firm. The least one can do to ensure a good quality performance is to ensure access to a good quality instrument. It is therefore necessary to put together carefully the performers' requirements, individual variations in instruments, acoustical parameters, merits and demerits of the different materials of construction etc. and relate them into atleast an empirical equation and determine the empirical constants by specifying the variables. In other words, standardization of the (good) quality of the percussive instruments is an imperative practical need while manufacturing them. An inexpensive, ready servicing facility is equally important.

A common sight in a classical music concert is the exodus of many listeners for relaxation as soon as the percussive *tani aavartana* commences. This deplorable situation may be remedied by making the common man receptive to the interesting and enjoyable aspects of the *tani aavartana* by exposing him to explanatory devices such as lecture demonstrations, illustrated programmes and popular writing on the subject.

Let our percussionists be always on the look out for new ideas and new sources of stimulation. Let them develop a broad enough outlook to look for ideas and techniques of performance in cognate fields such as light classical music, film music, folk music, western music etc. Transplantation of these into 'classical' soil with sympathetic insights into tradition would soon confer nativity on them. Mindless conservatism or conceptual stagnation would result in mental constipation and arthritis. One should be alert to this danger. There is another danger the percussionist fraternity must guard against : a major performance or percussion in post-independent India, it has already been noted, is the huge growth in the volume of learning, performing and listening. However, there is also a natural law which states that unregulated proliferation tolls its own knell because it brings about diffusion of quality. One may ignore this law only at one's peril.

"SUNAADAM MRUDANGAM"

Mrudanga Vidwan, Mrudanga Kalaa Shiromani

VELLORE RAMABHADRAN.

"Sogasuga Mrudanga Thaalamu jatha Kurchi ninnu Sokka jeyu dheerudevvadu"

So pleads Saint Thyagaraja with his upasana murthy Sri Ramachandra. (ie.) Who is the expert who can play the mrudangam so gently, with compassion and sing to enslave you? The substance of his out pouring conveys the direction that the mrudangam should be played with pleasant touches, with what that pleases the listening with 'Sunaadam' and no rough touches.

"Maddhala Thaala gathula Theliyakane Mardhinchuda Sukhamaa?"

Sadguru in another composition arts, the substance being this - if the mrudangam is played without the knowledge of 'Thaala gathis' and loudly, will this bring out the 'Sowkhyam' ever? Rough playing is compared to playing with a harsh approach for a livelihood for a low profession.

From the above similes, "the sublime music comes from fusion of melodic approach and thereby soothe the mind" and thereby attain 'Moksham'.

In another Krithi he states (Nada Sudha Rasambalanu - Aarabhi) the arrows from His bow will be the basis of the Thaala gathis.

From my very early years, I have heard from my father Vellore Gopalachari and other seniors, that Vidwan Sri Narayanappa, Thukkaram, Azhaganambia Pillai had all the 'Sunaadham' as the essential requirement in playing the mrudangam and gladdened the listeners and attained Moksham. In the recent years, Palghat Mani Iyer and Palani Subramanya Pillai brought out and upheld these principles in the playing of mrudangam and this has been a matter of great appreciation.

As Madurai Mani Iyer had observed often the 'naadam' should engulf the music. The soft and 'Sunaadham' touches in playing the mrudangam were the forte of Palani.

Palghat Mani Iyer

Usually, the uninitiated were unable to understand the mrudangam playing. Mani Iyer's playing on the instrument created the essential understanding even for the uninitiated through the various melodic sounds of rhythm, and made them sit up and appreciate. This percussion instrument was put in a high pedestal by Mani Iyer, for which we should all be thankful.

The meaning of the word 'Layam' is” A person who has engulfed (in total music) has involved himself with the music.

The mrudangam was made of 'Mruth' mud and after many changes is what we see today. It is carved of the seasoned wood from the jack fruit tree with the two opposite ends closed, both sides being covered with leather. The left side is called the 'Thoppi'. The right side is dressed with cooked rice, ash from burnt iron combination with a smooth stone until the desired shruthi level is obtained. The three different types of sound i.e. Meettu, Chaapu, Arai chaapu are obtained for the right side of the instrument. The left side provides the 'gumki'. The left side 'Thoppi' is dressed with wet rava to obtain the right 'naadam'.

As the instrument made with the wood other than jack fruit tree wood does not elicit the full compliment of sounds further attempts were given up. This jackfruit tree wood is most useful in the other instruments also such as Thambura, Veena, Kanjra etc.

There are other instruments for percussion, although nothing comes out as good as mrudangam. Now I remember what my father had told me once before :-

Madurai Pushpavanam rendered a 'cutcheri' at the samadhi of Sadguru Thyaga Brahmam. He was rendering 'Mohana Raga' that people acclaimed as never sung before, nor can be rendered equally or better. Then he followed it with 'Mohana Rama' Krithi. Azhaganambi on mrudangam, Dakshinamurthy on Kanjra were the accompaniments for percussion. After a little while Dakshinamurthy stopped playing Kanjra. To a query (eye brows raising query from Pushpavanam) he said, when there is such a 'nadha pravaham' from the mrudangam, where is the need to play the Kanjra? (that cannot reproduce the harmonics and nadham of mrudangam).

The mrudanga Vaadyam can be construed as a 'Deva Vaadyam' as Lord Nandeeswaran accompanies Lord Nataraja in his cosmic dance. If Nandeswaran was bent on 'beating' the mrudangam, Lord Siva would have perhaps opened his third eye and who knows what could have happened.

In the Krithi "Nadopoulosana" all the exponents of Laya, Swara, Raga are revered by Saint Thyagaraja what more can even be said?

I will conclude with the composition of Thyagaraja.

"Sogasuga mrudanga thalamu

Jatha Kurchi ninnu Sokka Jeyu Dheerudevvido"

(Translated by Vidushi Neela Ramgopal, Courtesy : Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras)

Mrudanga Vidwan, Mrudanga Kalaa Shiromani

UMAYALPURAM K. SIVARAMAN'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

52ND ANNUAL CELEBRATIONS OF INDIAN FINE ARTS SOCIETY, MADRAS

May I express my grateful thanks to Dr. V.K. Narayana Menon, President, Sangeet Natak Akadami who inaugurated this 52nd conference and to the assembled artistes, friends for all their loving orations in my favour. I express my profound thanks to Sri Emberumannar Chettiar and to the organisers of this Sabha for conferring the title of 'Sangeetha Kalaa Sikhamani' this year. In honouring me this year, I consider that the vidwans practising the mrudangam 'Kalai' are all equally honoured. It is my humble request that the artistes and lovers of art support this function well.

The art forms in India are ancient. Our fore fathers have expended great efforts to sustain these various art forms and this has resulted in the continuing growth and the growth of art has seen the growth of artistes. What was sustained by the kings in the past are now being nurtured by the Govt, art centres and artists..

In the same manner that the Supreme being is not comprehensible, the mrudangam is as old, as is evidenced in the Puranas. ('Nandi' Bagavan playing this instrument to the cosmic dance of Lord Nataraja). That Valmiki, Kalidasa, Bharatha, Nandikeswara, Saranga Deva, Naval, Ilango Adigal, Sri C.V. Raman have all enthused themselves with this instrument, bears recognition of its ancient character.

The stone carvings in Trichy and Pallavaram indicate that Mahendra Varma of the times of Appar was conferred as belonging to the sankeema vargam, for having laid down the sankeema thala. It can be inferred from the historical records the extent to which this art form had progressed, based on the writings of Ilango Adigal. Sri C.V. Raman after his researches has conveyed that mrudangam is a Musical Instrument. I have in various Lectures brought out the aesthetic qualities of this instrument.

Many historical records indicate the various percussion instruments that have been in vogue. The 'maddhalam' has been given the pride of place by Ilango Adigal. 'Math' means sound and hence maddhalam. Various percussive instruments were, known as Aharnuzhavu, Puramuzhavu, Ahappuramuzhavu, Purappuramuzhavu etc.

In all forms of music such as Sastriya, Laghu etc, the mrudangam sounds mix well with the music rendered and supports it together and in gaps this enlivens the programme. In this, the mrudangam artistes have a great role to display.

The audience during concerts assemble to support the artistes. It is the duty of the artistes in turn to support the public by meaningful presentations. The artistes on the stage compliment each other's efforts to bring out the musical qualities in the presentation. So it is the mind of all that supports and enhances a music presentation through the artistes and the listeners. The rapport increases.

Our elders have said that the growth of music lies in the proper understanding of the intricacies and the nuances in the music. The Govt and the various bodies of cultural entertainments are preserving and supporting these art forms and this is commendable.

It is my desire that the ancient art be preserved in its purity. I stress this because, the RTP in the present day programme, is given a secondary place. It needs the time for proper presentation on the stage. The 2 or 2 1/2 hour concerts seem too short a period, compared with the 4 to 5 hours period in the past. The Rasikas also look for new Krithis and ragas being rendered. So in a short concert the RTP does not get the important place. If this trend continues, the RTP will get confined to the Lec-Dem's only. It is my request that the trend is reversed.

Our elders have considered the Therapeutic good effects of music on human beings and this has stood the scrutiny of the scientific community. The defining of the various aspects have all been achieved by our elders. Such as the Raga delineating aspects, the various Thalās, Nadham, Nadha Rupam etc. To understand all these can be a lifetime effort. We need to imbibe all these and equip ourselves to move further forward. We should not decay these efforts of progress.

Kalidasa has said :-

पुनर्विन्नेव न शङ्कु मव
न चापि काश्य नव विन्नु वदन्तु । !
मग्रा षण्डि अयन्त मा दक्षे ।
मूढः पश्यत्यनेन बहिरः

I am of the opinion the Jugal Bandhis are a good method for natural integration. On introspection I opine that if the artistes can spend some efforts to understand the diversity in the different schools of Indian music, it will be worth while

It is the experience that propels humanity forward. If the younger artistes can interact with the elders, the experience can get enriched and progress can be achieved. The thoughts and action should be interdependant for progress to be achieved. The parents play an important part in supporting the younger generation embrace the art form, and I appreciate such efforts.

Some thoughts are spared for the students of music. The pupils whether they take to music as a profession or not, should expend all their energies, intellect, when undergoing training. Discipline is required. This learning will show in good stead at any later point of time - as occasion arises. Practising, what is learnt with devotion is necessary. As is said "Practice begets perfection". Lazy approaches do not pay and what is learnt can only decay. This is true in any vocation or study. All the students should spend all their learning period in learning all the aspects of mrudangam playing

To shine in playing mrudangam, the student should necessarily learn music (vocal) or playing other instruments. The young should come forward to learn playing the various instruments apart from learning the playing the mrudangam. I am suggesting this, in the interest of promotion of music. It is also my desire that music is in the curriculum in the places of learning and I do hope the people and the Goot will come forward to artist.

I accept this 'Birudhu' wholeheartedly.

(Translated by Vidushi Neela Ramgopal, Courtesy : Indian Fine Art Society, Madras).

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ART OF PERCUSSION AND LAYA IN THE PAST FIVE DECADES

Mrudanga Vidwan, Mrudanga Kalaa Shiromani

Te. Ve. GOPALKRISHNAN

Literally it would be more apt to alter the above heading as "The developments in the art of performance in Percussion and Laya in this Century!." We (the music lovers) are so fortunate to be alive and sensitive in this particular era of Indian musical history just crossing over to the 21st Millineum. So much has happened in this period 1900-1990s-in Music, Dance, Theatre, Cinema and the Media presentations that everything that have happened in the previous 1500 years could be encapsualised in one C.D.!

We shall have a bird's eye view of the musicological history at first. As is known, all that could be mentioned about Laya, Tala, Vadya and their performance were laid down in Bharatha's Natyasastra and the Tamil works in Silappadikaam, Panchamarabu etc. The later Musicological works in Sanskrit and other Northern languages are mainly the echos of Bharatha and the Tamil works reflected from Silappadikaram. There have been mention of the Avanadha Vadya Kutapam (Percussion Enzemble) in Sangita Ratnakaram itself. Making the percussion instruments, playing techniques, when, what, how and which instruments of play have all been well defined and specified in Natyasastra.

But there has been a void between the 13th and 16th Century in the real art of performing. We hear of the Mridangam, Tabla, Dholak etc. along with the Naik rulers in the Tanjore and allied Royal courts and also the Travancore palace. The most memorable names are that of Narayanaswamy appa, Azhagan nambi Pillai, Nannu mian Dholak, etc. The contribution of Nagasaram, Thavil the Chinna melam and Penamelam in Tamiladu in the realm of Percussion is astounding. Till the turn of the century percussion was discussed as a part of music and dance or as contests in the Sadas of Rajahs and Zamindars.!

The advent of Sabha Ganam or concert music and the appearance of great Laya Vadya Exponents created new revolution in the art of percussion in South India.

Starting with Narayanaswamy appa who brought a great sense of aesthetics, sweetness and inspiration by his mridangam accompaniment to his own vocal music in his Saturday bhajans, the art of Mridangam accompaniment was developed by the mellifluous Azhagan nambi pillai who was famed for his 2-3 minutes short Thanis after each big kritis. In the words of the all time Mridangam phenomenon and wonder, the Late Palghat Mani Iyer, the Laya jnana of Pudukkottai Manpundia Pillai and his worthy disciple- Dakshinamurthipillai made the contemporary music concerts occasions to remember and cherish. Also the schools of percussion bifurcated as the Tanjore bani & Pudukkottai bani with the school developed by Palani Muthiah Pillai (also a disciple of Manpundia pillai) and the great left handed maestro Palani Subramania Pillai. There were other schools of Percussion like the Andhra, Mysore and Kerala. We shall however restrict our study to those who have left us an inexhaustible legacy of layasadhana for all times to come.

We could **classify the developments in the last 5 decades** and over as follows:

1. Area of accompaniment.
2. Area of Thanivartham or Tala vadya ensemble.
3. Area of creative percussion and playing techniques.
4. Area of developing the instrument and experimentation.

Prior to Narayanaswamy Appa, the accompanists especially Percussion and talam stood or sat behind the main musicians while performing. Only because Narayanaswamy appa sang and accompanied himself on mridangam, he used to be allowed to sit along with the main artist. Later this tradition was accepted. The percussionist had only a minor role to play. Just keep the tekkas and provide 1/4 avartha or 1/2 avartha aruthis and teermanams during the kriti and at the end. Tani avarthams were not a regular feature. With Azhaganambi Pillai, Mylattur Krishna Iyer, Das Swamikal, Manpundia Pillai, Dakshinamurthi Pillai, Thanjavur Mahalingam Pillai, Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer (the illustrious teacher of Palghat Mani Iyer and T.K. Murthi) and a host of others, the mridangam rose in stature and slowly the vocalists and instrumentalists as also the rasikas began to expect more from the percussionists.

There are sufficient number of gramophone records - for us to have some authentic material to compare notes with the further developments and also first hand evidence from many of us who had the good fortune to hear the great maestros and who are still performing.

Now let us take up the different aspects for detailed review.

1. Area of Accompaniment :-

The basic concept of percussion in any system of music, has been from time immemorial to keep time, tempo and the progress of the music of composition from sagging or going astray.-the uniqueness of Indian percussion has been emphasised even from the times of Bharatha. As my compass is only to *highlight the developments in the past 50 years* and more, I do not delve into the details of what Bharatha said on these aspects. Anyway the percussion accompaniment continued to follow the age-old traditions except when intricate and creative pallavis were sung in competitions where the percussionists and other accompanists gave good account of themselves when challenged. The general tendency was to keep time as in the tradition of Hindusthani music, which is prevalent even today.

After Narayanaswamy Appa's advent, mridangam accompaniment became noticeable as he sat on a par on the right side of the main artist and not behind him. The trend of keeping chouka (slow)kala teka for the Pallavi, Madhyama kala sarvalaghu (running patterns) for the Anupallavi/Charana Pallavi and chouka for Charanam was formulated and perfected by him. Even today, this has great relevance. Mylattur Krishna Iyer and Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai innovated a great deal in these tekkas. They started the trend of improvising according to situations and artists individuality which in itself added great colour to the concerts. For example, the accompaniment to Pushpavanam

Iyer differed greatly from that of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar.

Accompanying the inimitable Karaikkudi brothers Veena and Nayana Pillai was different story altogether. Pushpavanam Iyer was sweetness personified with a golden voice-great aura but limited repertoire. Whatever the accompanist did only added to the concert and there could be no failures. His ability to sing in any sruthi between 2 and 4 ('d' & 'r') made accompaniments happy. Konerirajapuram had a fractious voice which took time to settle as nice and attractive and the accompanists had a waiting game to play. With Poochi Iyengar, it was always varying repertoire (himself being a composer) and a challenge always. The Veena brothers were a combination of sweet and hot stuff - the elder Subbarama Iyer played the Veena upright and was a virtuoso in intricate neraval and Swara prastharas and Sambasiva Iyer was the placid raga ocean. Palghat Mani Iyer told me that Dakshinamurthy Pillai was most circumspect and careful when he accompanied them and naturally one could hear Superlative music and percussion from them. Naina Pillai was a unique vidwan with equal command over Laya, Sahitya, Raga and art of performance and a great Upasaka. His concerts were a veritable battlefield-with many upavadyams thrown into the fray All this happened at a time when there had been no great changes in the playing techniques-only few solus were often used - few korvais - most korvais and theermanams were common repertoire! **The meteoric rise of Palghat Mani Iyer in this horizon made a great revolution in this aspect of accompaniment-as also in all other aspects. But in the area of accompaniment he stands the tallest for all times.** His acute awareness of the singers' or instrumentalists' micro - second level nuances-his acute sense of the particular situation or context of a sangathi/sahitya or even a vocal accent, and how he responded to it with his mridangam play or even very sensible silence-this **heralded a new era of Percussion.** The infinite ways of adding colour to a kriti, niraval or Swarprasthara by changing the sarvalaghu patterns in midstream or even the nadais. The sudden fast forward or the reversal of Chouka, madhyama and duritha - the incomparable use of the left for emphasis, for softness and for emotive effects! I shall fail in my duty if I do not mention the names of Vaikom Krishna Iyer and his disciple Venkappan Pillai from Kerala who had added similar initiatives in their accompaniments earlier to Mani Iyer but to a much lesser degree. My guru Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar gave many concerts with all the afore mentioned percussionists and what I quote is mainly from his anecdotes. He said that Vaikom Krishna Iyer heard Palghat Mani Iyer's performance in person the first time and told my Guru after the concert that, now I shall retire from today and thus keep my good name! That was the impact of Mani Iyer. **The Pudukkottai style** made fine by Palani Subramania Pillai basically **followed the tala and song accompaniment** and highlighting mainly the rhythmic flow of the music and this was immensely pleasing and satisfying for many performers. Palghat Mani Iyer's aura of stealing the thunder (inspite of him being so diminutive and modest) was not also acceptable for some performers. The music of Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar and my guru Chembai gave ample opportunities for the percussionists to prove their mettle.

The thrikala niraval, chaturkala swaras, four-Kala pallavis, intricate thillanas-all added to the exotic flavour of the concerts.

After these great maestros whom we heard enjoyed and benefited, I feel we have improved the accompaniment aspects like question - answer or repeating the main artists' phrasings on percussion rhythmically and musically. Today's patterns of such rhythmic phrases and kuraippus are much more intricate, planned and executed very cleverly. As the musical knowledge of Dakshinamurthy Pillai and Mani Iyer helped them to evolve the positive accompaniment, the percussion or laya awareness of flute Mali, Veena Balachander, Dr. Balamurali, Laigudi and also T.R. Subramaniam made them create many wonderful percussive edifices in their concerts. Accompanying them with success without preparation or rehearsals have always been a greater challenge than ever before!

2. Thani Avartham:- Talavadyam Enzemble

The popularity of Sabhaganam from the early decades of this century and expanding areas of public concerts in temples, marriages and festivals of savants and saints increased the entertainment value of concerts and the importance of long percussion interludes in a four-hour or five-hour concerts. Another reason was the lack of any other form of cultural programmes. Other than music concerts, nagaswaram music in temple festivals - long drawn out Taval duets and quartets was another source of entertainment. Intricate gathis, korvais and gathibhedams etc. gained popularity even among the masses. The concerts of many vidwans in the period 1930-45 became top heavy with too many percussionists on stage. They were called full bench - in continuance of the name Katcheri given to music concerts, same word denoted the law courts as well! There was a raging controversy in the 'Hindu' newspaper for nearly 3 months on the advisability and acceptability of so much niraval, svara, tana, pallavi and taniavarthanam in a concert to the detriment of great bhava laden kritis and padams etc. It was Prof. Sambamurthi alone who came to the rescue of Creative music. Manodharma Sangitha which is the live force of Carnatic music and he successfully ended the controversy in favour of everything that is aesthetic appealing (Incidentally, it would be interesting for the Percussive Arts Centre to reproduce this unique war of words between Mr. Muthuswamy Iyer and K.E.Krishna Iyer, Secretaries, Music Academy on one side and Prof. Sambamurthi and one or two others).

In the later era, the concerts got shortened in time and thanis also naturally suffered in size. So the percussionists had to be more precise and to the point in the individual forays especially in the Radio etc. Now we have separate opportunities for Laya Vinyasa or Tala Vadya Katcheris - I was one of the earliest such musicians to sing and then play a LayaVinyasam. Mani Iyer started the trend along with Palani Subramania Pillai following suit. S.V.S. Narayanan gave many such concerts as also Ganjira & Mridangam Maestro Madurai Krishna Iyengar who was an accomplished singer. The earliest Laya Vadya record was given by me in the name Laya Madhuri with Tiruvannur Nagarajan,

Ganjira, K.M.Vaidyaathan - ghatam. On this L.P., many new ideas were introduced. Vellore Ramabhadran gave a mridangam solo and later, others followed suit. But the **trend for Thani Avarthanams in records** was originated by my Guru Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. In almost all the fifty 78 RPM records, he allowed thanis. Especially the very first record of his with Palghat Mani Iyer in his Sri Mahaganapathim and Sri Balasubramanyaya (Bilahari) he did not sing swaram at all to provide time (only 3.75 mts per side!) for the Tani of Mani Iyer and many records Mani Iyer and Dakshinamurthi Pillai (Ganjira) and in some Morsing Sachidanandam as well. To remember that it was all a single take recordings-all perfectly done-sometimes time running out on Thani but ended with a "Sabhaash"! Konnakkol, mridangam, ganjira, ghatam, morsing, gettuvadyam and dholak completed the full bench! **Thematic korvais and kuralippus became a fashion in the late fifties and sixties** also experimentations with starting the Thani straight with Tisra gathi or Khand gathi, Moharas and korvais-ornamental and fancy arai aruthis or endings after the eduppu to the half avartham of the tala also were introduced by Mani Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai when they played together on Mridangam and Ganjira. Words are not enough to explain the aesthetic pleasure got out of such encounters. !

3. Area of creative percussion and playing techniques:

The expanse of rhythmic possibilities became limitless with the improved playing techniques and the increasing influence of musical intellectuals in organising Laya Vinyasam. Once Karakkudi Muthu Iyer, (then Prof. of Mridangam in Govt. Music College, Chennai) told me that when Mani Iyer played for the first time tisra gathi camafauged as Chaturasram in his thani-the listeners were stunned by the impact. He went on to play the Chatusra korvais in Tisra gathi (still not revealing the Tisra aspect) and the strokes were landing at odd places in the talam but coming to eduppu! Today it is a child's play for even novices. But somebody had to do it first. Mani Iyer later smiled and told Muthu anna when queried that it is simple - if you repeat three times whatever you play will come to eduppu in. Tisram-so you have to just adjust the eduppu - if you want to play it once !

The Vilamba, Tisra and madhyama kala korvais - tisra, madhyama, tisra korvais, trikala korvais all were improved upon with more intricate solfa patterns. The patterns were limited earlier mainly due to lack of application or use, also because of the playing techniques which gave more importance to tonal purity and clarity (naada suddhi and vinyasa suddhi) so the finger were always anchored on the skin faces and speed was not relevant! With changing styles, kutcheri format and fast briga voices the playing techniques had to be improved. Fast and superfast patterns were executed with perfection by changing finger techniques. For the same solfapatterns involving nam, thankita-the traditional fingers were used the right forefinger for "namthari", middle and ring together for "tha" and forefinger for "ri" (in some schools it is kita-thaka) but the fingerings hold good-(left middle and ring together for "ki" and right ring and middle for tha) but in the very fast rendition after "nam" by forefinger, the middle finger alone for "tha" and forefinger for "ri" and middle finger for "ki" and ring finger for "Tha"-this technique was originally used by

Mani Iyer and later on we find that this is a very common way of playing fast passages in Tabla. But in mridangam this technique cannot produce audible and clear sound at all unless you have the perfect hand and finger balance to play hard and soft strokes! In the same manner **techniques were evolved to use the left hand fingers** to get janta and repeat strokes in leftside of "Ihoppi" "guguthan gugu naka tharikita"-"tharigugu (repeats) **with gumkaram** Instead of "thom" (open) - this technique was easily played on the tavil with the stick without the hand getting tired, but with the folded middle and forefinger one could generate equal volume of sounds. **Mani Iyer, Palani Subramania Pillai and Ramnad Murugabhupathy were highly skilled at this and evolved individual styles.** Venkappa Pillai of (Alleppy) who had accompanied all great masters in his day, revelled in playing for dramas as well, Dramas of S.V. Subbiah Bhagavathar and others. He had a perfect techniques of using the left main toe to modulate the Gumkaram and play with the left fingers like the Ganjira. Later players abandoned it as it was difficult and also not aesthetic (to use ones foot for playing). Also **Mani Iyer started the musical tone reproduction on the left like Sa, Pa, Sa etc** This was later developed by me when I had to accompany Dr. Balamuralikrishna, Veena Balachander and flute Mahalingam who were very generous to bring out the best of their accompanists. I nearly successfully repeated the swara prastharas of these maestros extempore. One can look at the fingers and play in the case of Violin, Veena and Flute. But mridangam topi (left) is so positioned that one cannot see where the hand and fingers are - when one has to produce the particular Sadharana Ga or Prathi Madhyama!. I play more by instinct and the pliability of the particular mridangam's skins. This aspect has not been really highlighted or appreciated by musicians of even the serious rasikas - naturally for the layman it sounds like magic and he is fully appreciative!!

Development of the instrument and experimentation:

The Mridangam of olden days (earliest part of this century) were smaller, with bigger surfaces. On right 7 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches and left also $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 inches in diameter as the Sruthi for male and female singers were almost same $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ (black 4 and 5) in the sruthi petti or "F sharp" and "G sharp". The voices were high pitched so as to carry distances (mileless days). Later, the pitches came down to 2, $1\frac{1}{2}$, and 1 and even less. Naturally the mridangams got bigger and longer in size but the right and left diameters got smaller. Dakshinamurthi Pillai started the trend and later the other maestros followed suit. Trials with various woods, various types of skins continued. Mani Iyer preferred black coloured cow and goat leather for the right and spotted goat skin for the left spread! All such nostalgic information. I gathered from Paralanth and Sebastain Chetty (Subramania Pillai's worker), who were brought to Madras and settled down by me with the help of my dear friend Late Tanjore Upendran. The repairers travelled with the players all the time for emergencies!

I experimented with *different woods* with the veteran Somu Achari, the premier disciple of Subramania Achari of Tanjore who was considered to be the Viswakarama of all musical instruments. I had instruments in Raktha Chandanam, Ebony, Rose wood, Maple,

Mahogany, Red cedar, Konnal and the regular pala or Jackwood and also the cheap and best wood called Kotukkapuli (a variety of Tamarind tree) which gives excellent resonance. - ideal weight, fine finish and termite free. Also many *ideas for tightening the both sides were tried, like the hook and spring method* originally initiated by me on mridangam in 1954 and abandoned as it hurt the fingers and palm. But, later introduced in thavil because of the shape of the heads where there is no possibility of hurt. Nowadays, people have started using the teflon ropes which were also introduced by me along with the left and right side separation (which is yet not very popular!). *Karanai was tried on left from good old days mostly without success - but I succeeded in that and it helped to play musical notes because of the steady and reliable pitch it offered on the left! Now I use the special quality accoustic gum for the left* and many of the younger generation have also taken to it!

On the aspect of **experimentation in rhythms** - the interaction with Tabla maestros Pt. Kishan Maharaj, Shamtha Prasad and Allah Rakha started in the Mani Iyer and Palani era and also rare test East - West meets with Western Jazz musicians like Dave Brubeck and Stan Gage with the above maestros helped to open up the receptivity of our Rasikas and musicians. I had the earliest opportunity to play with the above mentioned Western musicians and in addition, to interact with composers like Alan Hovhanes, John Scott, John Cacavas (Of Airport movie fame), Tom Scott etc. in the early fifties, and later travelling with the Beatles fame George Harrison and Pt. Ravi Shankar in '74 followed by my own numerous travels abroad where I met and played, composed music for many such Jazz interactions and I *formed my own Carnatic Jazz group in early '70s* with todays top stars of Indian film & Jazz music like Sivamani, Mahesh, JoJo, Johnny, Swamy, my disciple Kadri, A.R. Rehman (the famous film music director) and others I also gave the first conceptual L.P. "Percussion thro' the ages" - tracing the evolution of South Indian or Karnatic percussion with a tala vadya katcheri included. This was in the year of the India festivals in the West organised for the first time after the independence by our Govt. **Karalkudi Mani also presented an L.P. "Sruthi Laya"** and followed it up with concerts of Sruthi Laya, basically Carnatic instrumental music and percussion and later on did many different formats of Similar concerts in India and abroad. **Umayalpuram Sivaraman has also done many similar Laya and Music innovations.** All of us still continue to serve the cause of Percussion in our own inimitable ways to promote and propogate the interest in Percussion and the beauty of Percussion in the younger generations and generations to come!!

I have to include a page on the contribution of our talents of Kamataka of the golden era (1930 - 1980) in percussion. I do not have sufficient information in English. I shall gather some from Bangalore later.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELDS OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS

Vidwan MAYURAM G. SWAMINATHAN

The Oxford Dictionary gives the meaning of the English word, percussion, as the "striking of a body against another, jarring or vibration or sound so made." If the sound resulting from the striking of two bodies can evolve to the level of an art, involving the application of skills, it surely speaks volumes of the march of human ingenuity and achievements in the world of culture.

The origin of music goes far back to pre-historic times and primitive music is inferred to have been rhythmic rather than melodious, having a fundamental affinity to the simpler and cruder forms of folk songs. Rhythm is an in-built feature in nature as evidenced by the change of seasons, phases of the moon and even heart beats of the human body. This should have influenced the evolving man from ancient times to build upon rhythm and develop gradually more and more complicated instruments based on rhythm - from the simple drum to the highly evolved Mridangam.

The expressions played traditionally on Mridangam, the king of percussion instruments, have a spiritual significance. The five main syllables "Tat" (ta), "Dheeh" (dhi), "Tvam" (Toam) "Nah" (Nam) and Jham played on the Mridangam, all symbolising the Pranava, are said to have originated from the five faces of Sadasiva, the auspicious third God of the Hindu Trinity. Nandikesvara's 14 fundamental syllables of the Mridangam emanated from the sounds of Siva's damaru (hand drum) during his Tandava dance.

Indian Music has long recognised the importance of rhythm of laya as is clear from the oft-quoted Sanskrit verse which says that "Sruti is the mother of music and laya, its father", implying that while the mother nourishes the child with love and affection and makes it grow, it is the father who disciplines the growing child. If Raga of Indian Music governs its melodic element, tala, the cyclic rhythmic pattern, helps in maintaining the balance of music. The Raga and Tala systems are India's great contribution to the musical heritage of the world.

Our ancient Vedic literature contains references to crude earthen and wooden drums covered with the skin of wild animals. In the four Vedas and also in different Brahmanas we get references of drums like Dundubhi, Bhumi-dundubhi, Panava, Bhanda, Karkari, etc. The Vedic humns were melodic chants and the Samans were sung to the accompaniment of different kinds of musical instruments like lute, pipe of flute, bow instruments and drum. The Altareya Brahmana and the Vedic Pratsakhya mention the samuha gita and gana giti, which were choral singing accompanied by different musical instruments like Vina, Vena and Mridangam the Vadya traya.

The early Tamil work, Silappadikaram, assigned to the 2nd century A.D., devotes a whole canto to various aspects of musical science and we find the drummer having a prominent place in enhancing the appeal of vocal music. The later day Saivaites and Vaishnavaites devotional literature of Nayanmars and Azhvans of the Tamil land also speak of a number

of musical instruments ('isaikkaruvigal') including drums of different shapes and designs and cymbals. The Ramayana of the Tamil poet, Kamban, also refers to several ancient musical instruments including the percussion instruments like bheri, damaru, jhar jhari, jhalli and maddala.

While music concerts were already known in the Vedic age, concerts in the sense of music performances open to the public usually on payment, are a fairly recent institution, having originated just a century ago. *Not much is known about the percussion artistes of the medieval times of recent centuries.* Abraham Pandithar's "Kamamirtha Sagaram", a treatise on music in Tamil and English (originally published in 1917) is the one source of information on experts in South Indian Music of the age and earlier, from which we get names of quite a few musicians who were well versed both in the vocal and percussive arts. Mridangam has rightly been given a very prominent place in our music concerts, besides its role as an accompanying instrument in devotional music programmes, Harikatha performances and classical dance recitals. It has earned its pre-eminent position among the percussion instruments by the captivating notes and scintillating fabric of very sweet sound combinations which can be coaxed out of it. The Mridangam adds to the appeal of the music of the main performer (vocalist/melody instrumentalist) because it can be very accurately turned to the basic pitch or 'sruti' of the vocalist/instrumentalist, which is not possible to the same extent in the case of the auxiliary percussion instruments like Khanjira, Ghatam and Morsing or Tavil, the open air percussion companion of the wind instrument of Nagaswaram.

As to how the Mridangam art has evolved in the last century or so, with the current-day recording facilities not being available then, we have only to fall back on details gathered mainly from oral accounts of yesteryear musicians. In the Tamil country two traditions of Mridangam playing were in vogue around the beginning of this century. The Tanjavur tradition of percussive art had its origin in the Bhajana and Harikatha Sampradaya introduced by the Marathas, while the Pudukkottai tradition was inspired by the technique of Tavil playing for Nagaswaram performances in temples of Tamil nadu through the centuries.

Pudukkottai Manpoondia Pillai is believed to have taken interest in the propagation of the Tiruppugazh verses of St. Arungirinata in their original "chanda" talas and he also formulated "sollukattus" (rhythmic expressions) appropriate to their metric structure. He also designed "moharas" and "korvais" for use in "tani avarthanam" (percussion solo) for different Talas. Pillai had earned Khanjira its due place on the Carnatic concert platform and played it with many of the Mridangam stalwarts of the day in the early years of this century like Narayana swamy Appa. He trained a number of vocalists in the intricacies of tala, the most prominent of them being Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar. It was again Pillai who fashioned the triple "tha dingi na thom" format in swara singing and laya Vinyasa for greater aesthetic appeal, which has come to stay as the accepted pattern in concert music during this century. After him, Pudukkottai Dakshinamoorthy Pillai, Pazhaani Muthiah Pillai (father of noted laya exponent, Pazhani Subrahmanya Pillai), Ilupoor Panchapakasa (Panchami) Pillai and Seithur Zamindar handled Khanjira successfully.

Kumbakonam Azhaganambi Pillai, another prominent Mridangam artist of the early decades of this century, is credited with a throbbing style with his thekas and pharans in double and quadruple tempos set in cross rhythm to the krti and his crisp Mukhtayis lending vivacity to then music. This style of playing was later changed into one in more or less the same tempo as the song.

The unique styles and techniques of *Dakshinamoorthy Pillai on the Khanjira* and of *Umayalpuram Sundaram Ayyar on the Ghatam* inspired some of the youngsters of the time to take to these auxiliary percussion instruments.

Pudukkottai Dakshinamoorthy Pillai, equally adept in Mridangam, Khanjira and Ghatam, produced the star pupil, Pazhani Subrahmanya Pillai, who along with the legendary Palghat Mani Ayyar reigned over the concert field for about quarter of a century till his premature demise in 1962. While retaining the salient features of the Pudukkottai tradition, he introduced many innovative features. *The "Pazhani" style of Mridangam playing* combined great technical virtuosity with the utmost refinement and grace. The presentation of patterns with "ghumkis" (graces), predominance of the soft and simple sarvalaghush to sweeten music, their logical development into astonishing varieties and timanas and the clarity of strokes in fast play formed *fascinating traits in his artistry*.

Another inheritor of the Pudukkottai tradition and a successful contemporary of Pazhani Subrahmanya Pillai on the concert platform was Ramanathapuram C.S. Murugabhupati (he passed away recently at a very ripe age), whose father, Ramanathapuram Chitsabi Servai, was one of the disciples of Pudukkottai Manpoondia Pillai

The most famous exponent of the Tanjavur tradition was Tanjavur Vaidyanatha Ayyar (who passed away in the middle decade of this century). His attractive style produced in irrepressible desire in young aspirants from the Malayalam land like Palghat Mani Ayyar and Tiruvananthapuram (later Tanjavur) T.K. Murthy to become his disciples. Vaidyanatha Ayyar is believed to have systematised the Mridangam lessons for students.

Mani Ayyar and Pazhani Subrahmanya Pillai were undoubtedly the two towering personalities in the percussive art field in this century. All through their lives they remained accompanists and they considered it their sacred duty to embellish the music of the main performers - *they almost transformed Mridangam into vocal music. Mani Ayyar in particular gave more importance to pauses which add laya lustre.* The degree of his instrumental perfection and the genius of his playing with minute attention to the styles of the main performers made him **an artiste of unparalleled calibre in the world of Carnatic music.** The 'tani avartanam' which had been introduced in concerts mainly to give some rest to the main performer and the violinist became particularly a favourite with even lay listeners who used to wait eagerly for his solo session, which was generally brief. Mani Ayyar held the view that a 'tani avartanam' is not such a big affair since the Mridangist only repeats the 'korvais' and 'kanakkus' he has thought about and practiced at home. Also, according to him, the Mridangam accompanist taking more than 10 minutes in a concert for his solo turn was no good. This is in sharp contrast to the current trend in concerts which witness laya bouts in the name of 'tani avartanam' for durations ranging between 20 and 30 minutes, creating in the process a side show!

Mani Ayyar felt that a percussionist should also have knowledge of songs mostly sung in concerts and he was himself a good vocalist. For he had realised that knowledge of the movement of the musical patterns enables a percussionist to play his 'sollus' with perception. His success on the concert platform rested on his amazing ability to make a responsive adjustment to rhythm and to lift even an ordinary note to great heights.

His quality of 'anticipation', anticipating the Sangatis of the vocalist and playing accordingly was very well appreciated by rasikas. When the musician finished his rendering of the kriti, Mani Ayyar's 'teermanam' never exceeded half avarta or one avarta at the most, not a mini 'tani avartanam' running to three of four avartas. Mani Ayyar's style had a profound influence on many young aspirants like Palghat Raghu, Vellore Ramabhadran and Umayalpuram Sivaraman, who are our senior laya exponents in the contemporary concert platform.

During the last quarter century, there has been an explosive growth in the number of our youngsters taking to Mridangam. The number of artistes handling the upapakka vadyas like Ghatam, Khanjira and Morsing has also been growing steadily, thanks to the large number of schools for percussive arts started by some of our leading performers and the not so successful performers who have turned teachers. Today's percussion artistes are generally academically far better qualified than their seniors and the yesteryear giants. Quite a few of them are not only post-graduates but are even engineering graduates with specialisation in telecommunication, management science or computers, which has fostered a critical and dynamic approach to their musical calling. They want to cut themselves loose from the earlier supportive role of the accompanists and assert their individuality, based on their superior technical competence. As a knowledgeable observer of the music scene has put it, a more aggressive approach on their part has replaced the largely laid back approach of the stalwarts of the past and evolution of an exhibitionist style of playing has largely replaced the somewhat introspective one of the middle decades of this century. Hybridisation of playing styles is also part of this approach.

Another facet of the assertion of the individuality of the percussive artists is the emergence of the percussion ensembles in the past two or three decades. Not satisfied with the 10-15 minutes allotted to the percussionists in standard concerts to display their skills in percussion interludes, **they see in the percussion ensembles the golden opportunity to express themselves fully.** This wonderful institution of "Tala Vadya Kacheri" was introduced and fostered to a great extent by All India Radio, whose southern region stations have been regularly scheduling percussion ensembles in their programmes in the last half century or so. This has also been a regular feature in the annual Radio Sangeet Sammelan concerts introduced in the '50's. In this venture every artist vies with one another in the rhythmic elaboration of a specific Tala. At the end of this healthy rivalry the instruments come together in a grand finale. *The variety in the tonal colours and potentialities of each instrument, besides contribution of each participant combine to produce an overall enjoyable performance a sumptuous treat to those endowed with laya jnana and a thrilling experience to even an average listener. Percussion ensembles have, therefore, been featured in major music festivals held in different centres across the country and even abroad much to the entertainment of all sections of the*

audiences. Noted percussion artistes of the Hindustani system have also been participating successfully in this new area of creativity.

To keep faith with our axiom that melody and rhythm go together, the percussion ensemble is generally preceded by a musical composition - a Pallavi or a specially composed piece sung or played on a melodic instrument and at the end of the percussive exercise the musical composition is again rendered to bring it to a close. A new trend noticeable is the inclusion in the percussion ensembles of Western music instruments like the drums and the electronic rhythm pad. **A welcome feature noticed in recent efforts is the inclusion of "Konnakkol"** (oral mnemonics of the rhythmic patterns played on the instruments) and also the Gettu Vadya, an ancient stringed **percussion instrument** - in fact, **the only sruti-tala vadya**. The opportunities to innovate within the classical music parameters seem to be limitless.

Among the auxiliary percussion instruments, Ghatam or the mud pot has won global recognition thanks mainly to the brilliance of Ghatam wizard, T.H. Vinayakaram, who has mesmerised the Western audiences with the beats of this wonderful instrument and has also won the coveted Grammy Award. It is not improbable that Ghatam's other cousins would sooner or later receive such world level recognition.

With the setting up of schools and centres in different parts of the country devoted to the percussive arts, **there has been a welcome attempt to bring about greater awareness among the musically-minded public about the manifold aspects of laya and tala, the proper appreciation of the laya art and also the characteristics of different percussion instruments.** It was only recently that music lovers came to know through such efforts about the existence of a system of 72 Talas parallel to the 72 Melakarta Raga scheme of Carnatic Music. Authored by one Manikka Mudaliar, the Talas take their names in the same order as that of the Melakarta Raga Scheme and because of its complexities this tala scheme has virtually gone into oblivion. Presentation of such talas in public concerts may not be possible, but it could very well be part of lecture demonstration sessions arranged by leading cultural bodies like the Music Academy, Chennai in their annual music conferences and festivals.

Research and Development is part of any evolving artistic tradition and the percussive arts are no exception to it. While instruments like Khanjira and Morsing pose no problems in transportation because of their handy shape and size-e, it is Mridangam to a greater extent and Ghatam to a lesser extent which becomes unwieldy. Also Mridangam is a highly sensitive instrument and gets easily affected by the prevailing weather conditions. **Research is called for in the area of developing improved versions of instruments as can withstand the vagaries of weather and facilitate transportation over long distances with a reduced size and weight but without compromising their unique tonal qualities.**

With the percussive arts now rightly coming into their own, one hopes that this would stimulate the exploration of newer dimensions in music.

(The writer is the Art Critic, "The Hindu", New Delhi)

PERCUSSIVE ARTS, THE KERALA SCENARIO

L.S. Rajagopalan, Trichur

Kerala has a large variety of Percussion Instruments. One peculiarity is, that the Keralite uses even aerophones like Kombu (Horn) and Kuzhal (A Mohuri type pipe) as instruments of Rhythm. Another peculiarity is that there are very big ensembles of Drums (Chenda Mela) for temple festivals. The Drum Ensembles are generally used

1. For daily pooja in temples
 2. For festivals, Elephant processions etc.
 3. For performing arts like Kathakali etc.
1. The percussion instruments for daily poojas are Idakka, Chenda, Timila, Chengala, Ilathalam, Kombu, Kuzhal, etc. etc. Only old temples that have adequate funds use these instruments., for daily Poojas. The majority of the small temples do not have any instruments at all, because they cannot afford to maintain the artists for it. Even the bigger temples find it difficult as trained artists are not easily available, and, wages have become high. Also some of the instruments like Itupiti, Veeraanam, Damaanam etc are going out of vogue. When the existing instruments go into disrepair, they are not replaced. One consolation is that western drums are not being inducted into these ensembles.
 2. Festivals - Though the finances of the politically controlled temples are poor, local committees of devotees manage to collect funds and conduct the festivals with even more pomp than before. Kerala people employed in foreign countries contribute liberally for these festivals. Big Drum Ensembles can be seen in plenty in such festivals.
 - a) Normally Melams are seen in three Talas a. Chempata (Adi Tala). This is of a short duration. The one performed at the Paramekkavu temple at Trichur for the annual Pooram festival has reached a very high standard.
 - b) Panchari Mela - This is in Roopaka Tala starting from a very slow tempo of 96 Matras for a Tala Cycle, the tempo increases slowly to six matras. It may take four hours or more to perform a regular melam.
 - c) Another is the Pandi Melam in Triputa Talam. Here also starting at a very slow tempo it increases to a super fast tempo. The duration would be three to four hours.

There may be 150 drums or more playing together in unison for these Melams

There are Melams in other Talas also - Like Champa, Adantha etc. They are rarely heard in a few temples like Guruvayoor Triprayar etc.

One peculiarity of these melams, especially in slow tempo, is that they are rendered in units of eight Matras and an uninitiated listener will mistake them to be all in Aadi (8

matra) Tala.

The standards of these Melams have deteriorated much. There are a number of reasons.

1. People do not have the time or the inclination to stand in the hot sun or the sultry night for such long hours. With the audience dwindling, the interest of the drummer also dwindles.
2. There is a dearth of good artists. All the top artists are more than 70 years old, and so the prospects of continued high standards are poor.
3. There is a sort of contract system to recruit the large number of temporary artists. This has resulted in lack of coordination between the lead player and the other players. There is also lack of discipline.
4. There is no opportunity for the artist to exhibit his individual merit. It is a collective effort.
5. For playing the Panchari Melam, a stick on the right hand and the bare left palm are used on the Chenda. Playing with the palm is painful and unless the artist practices well the sound of the palm beats will not be well audible. This is one of the defects found in Panchari Melams.
6. In Chenda Melam the tempo is slowly increased and the performance completed in several stages. Old connoisseurs would be able to say by merely hearing the ensembles from outside, as to how many rounds of circumambulation (Pradakshina) the elephant procession has completed. Of late, there is a tendency to quicken to tempo and complete that stage and start on the next stage. This is very much disapproved by the older generation. The younger ones crowd round the drums and encourage the quickening of the tempo.

Another interesting ensemble is the Pancha Vadyam. Five instruments - Thimila, Maddalam, Idakka, Kombu and Ilathalam, are played in this. This ensemble got evolved in its present form hardly some 70 years ago. During this period it has reached big heights. The performance is in Tripura tala starting a very slow tempo and rising up to a very fast tempo of $3\frac{1}{2}$ matras. One important feature is that the duration of the performance is much lesser than the Chenda Melams. It is completed in one and a half to two and a half hours. Because it contains instruments like the Maddalam, the sound is more pleasing to the ears. As the instruments play individually during certain phases of the performance, there is a friendly rivalry between artists, and it is attractive. The standard has improved very much. This ensemble is the usual choice now for receiving visiting dignitaries.

Another item of drum playing is the THAYAMBAKA. This is a Thani Avartanam (Laya Vinyasa) on the Chenda. It is played in Chempata Tala (Adi Tala, 8 Matras). One artist helped by 2 to 4 Chendas and Elathalams to keep rhythm plays from one to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Of

late, Double Thayambaka (two chendas playing together) is becoming popular though it is not appreciated by the older generation. There was a time when Palghat Mani Iyer used to get ideas from hearing the Thayambaka players, but now it is the Tayambaka players who get inspiration from top ranking Mridangam players. Tisra, Khanda and Misra Natas are played and there is scope for displaying one's artistry just as in the case of the Mridangam. Thayambaka is well appreciated not only by people from other parts of India but even by foreigners. Recently one student from the U.S. completed his Ph.D. dissertation to Thayambaka and he could also perform well.

On the whole the standard of Thayambaka has much improved.

Orchestra for Kathakali :

Chenda, Maddalam, Idakka (Occasionally), Chengala (in the hands of the lead singer) and Ilathalam (with the second signer) are the only instruments. Formerly the accent of the performance was only on the correctness of the Tala. Now however the artists have also to render rhythmic patterns suitable for and synchronising with the Abhinaya. In the last 50 years there is a big improvement in the standard of performance. The drummers are now given as much importance as is given to the lead actors and singers.

Accompaniment for Koodiyattam :

Koodiyattam is the enactment of Sanskrit Dramas in temples (and also outside now). The main instrument is the Mizhav - a drum in the shape of a big pot. Two instruments are used, one to keep Tala and the other to play the Jatis. An Idakka drum and cymbals also assist. Koodiyattam has started attracting worldwide attention. Here also, the drummers were looking only to the correctness of the Tala in earlier days. Now the drummers very closely follow the abhinaya. Seeing a performance, Dr. Premalata Sharma (Vice Chairman, S.N.A.) remarked that one wonders whether the drummers follow the abhinaya or the abhinaya follows the drumming. Most of the performers on the field now are trained by Sri P.K. Narayanan Nambiar (son of the famous Maani Madhava Chakyar). Seeing the possibilities of the Mizhav, music directors from outside Kerala have started including it in their orchestras.

In the new innovations of drum ensembles, Mizhav is also included and one such ensemble at the Kerala Kalamandalam was directed by Sri Umayalpuram Sivaraman.

TEACHING

Formerly the teaching was confined to family circles. Such Gurukula systems does not work now. Fortunately a few Centres to teach these instruments have come up. Kerala Kalamandalam, the Vadya Vidyalayam at the Guruvayoor temple and the one conducted by the Travancore Devaswom Board at Vaikom are a few among them. One attraction is that the students get stipend for their studies and they get very many opportunities to listen and to perform.

Chenda Melam and similar ensembles are more popular in central Kerala (roughly from Calicut to Cochin). In the southern areas more importance is given to Taval and

Nagaswaram, but there does not seem to be any institution in Kerala to teach these two instruments.

Folk Instruments

Many of the instruments mentioned above and some others also are being used by Folk artists in their ensembles. Unfortunately there seems to be less interest in these folk performances. These artists normally belong to the so called 'Backward Communities'. Because of job reservations for them, they are getting more interested in White Collar jobs. When this writer attended a conference of one such Backward Community, he was surprised to find that the traditional art form of this community did not find a place in the programme. There was however competitions for the children of the community in Bharatanatyam, light music and so on. Unless efforts are taken to instill a sense of pride in their traditional art form, these folk arts will slowly disappear.

Another point connected with this is the daily wages earned by an average manual worker. In the last 50 years the wages have gone up by more than a hundred times. Sticking exclusively to their art form will not give them as much income, as they can get from these outside jobs.

These DALIT artists also have Chenda Melam etc which they perform in the festivals of their own temples. In addition they also perform in Churches and Mosques. Artists from the Forward communities were not performing in such festivals of Christians and Muslims. Now that there is no social taboo for these inter-religious performances and also since the remuneration given is also pretty good, the forward caste artists are also taking part in such festivals.

Instruments :

There is a phenomenal increase in the cost of these instruments. The average artist would find it difficult to own one and also to get it repaired. Traditional materials are therefore getting replaced with cheaper materials. In place of fibre strings, plastic strings are used to brace the drum heads. Even iron rods with nuts and bolts are used for it. Modern lathes and drilling machines are used to make wooden shells of the drums. With their new technique they are able to save the central portion of the log when making the shells and this central wooden block is used to make smaller instruments.

Youth Festivals :

In the youth festivals conducted in schools and colleges, performance on these drums are items of competition. This helps at least a section of the students to take more interest in these traditional art forms.

Thus it can be seen that while, due to the exigencies of modern times, there has been deterioration in the standards of some of the forms, the interest of the public and the standard of performance of those items where individual merit counts is only on the increase.

LAYA IN CARNATIC MUSIC...AND BEYOND....

Vidwan ALEPPEY VENKATESAN

The glory of Indian Music is that every one of its fundamental concepts is rooted in the most ancient wisdom known to man - the Vedas. "Sruti" is a synonym for the Vedas themselves. It means literally, "that which was heard"-meaning that the Eternal Truths ever present in the Cosmos were "heard" and understood by seers who were capable of doing so.

LAYA, as an expression and as a concept, has an interesting and equally ancient, history. Long before it came to mean the rhythmic aspect of our Music, Laya was synonymous with YOGA/the thureeya or fourth state of being (beyond waking, sleeping & dreaming)/ - union of the Jivatma with the Paramatma. The Patanjali Yoga Sutras frequently speak of "Samyama", which is a threefold sadhana-consisting of Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (absorption). Compare this with the expression, LAYAKARI, which is the 739th name in the Lalitha Sahasranamam. The meaning given in Bhaskararaya's commentary for "Layakan" is "causing absorption", that is to say, She is the Grantor of the boon of Laya-meaning yoga/the 4th state of union of all creation with the Original Source is PRA-LAYA. It is noteworthy that even in Saamgadeva's "Sanglitha Ratnakara", LAYA has been used in the above mentioned deeper sense that the rhythmic bedrock of our Music. Such are the mind-boggling ramifications of the concept of Laya, when we look at its ancient origin.

It is interesting that the English word for Laya in Music, viz. "RHYTHM" has a very close phonetic equivalent in Sanskrit-RTHAM. It means TRUTH. Rtham Vadishyaami Sathyam Vadishyaami (Taithiriyā Upanishad). Again, our national motto is "Sathyameva Jayathe; na Anrtham". Anrtham means falsehood. It is not clear whether there is an etymological connection as well.

Before talking about Laya as rhythm in Music, it would be instructive to examine the idea of rhythm in a larger context. The Divine Mother Gives each of us the gift of Laya even before we are born. Doctors tell us that the child in the womb derives comfort from the regular *rhythm* of the mother's heartbeat. The medical term for an aberration in this rhythm, or in other words, the *avalayam* of the heart, is *arrhythmia*. In the divine Design, the macrocosm is much like the microcosm. Scientists tell us that the atom, with its nucleus in the centre and a predetermined *number* of electrons swirling around it in a predetermined *frequency or rhythm*, confer particular properties on the atom and it looks much like the Solar System. Similarly, even as the child in the womb is comforted by the mother's

heartbeat, we, who are in the womb of Maya, can derive *comfort* and spiritual sustenance in deep meditation from the Divine Mother's Heartbeat in us, namely, the Anaaahata Naada/ Omkaara/Cosmic Vibration. It is noteworthy that the Bible describes this Sounds as "Amen, the *Great Comforter*".

That was a peep into Laya in the context of modern medicine. Now let us see what the modern physicist has to say about Laya. A high energy physics researcher has made a comparative study of subatomic physics and Eastern mysticism. He has this to say; "All forms of matter in Universe consist of atoms and subatomic particles. These particles are waves with specific *frequencies* and they are involved in ceaseless flow of energy, with certain *rhythm* and order. All things are aggregations of atoms that *dance* and by their movement, produce sound. When the *rhythm* of dance changes, the sound it produces also changes. Each atom perpetually *sings its song* and the sound at every moment creates dense and subtle forms. This has found beautiful expression in Hinduism in the image of Dancing God, Shiva. The Cosmic Dance of Shiva thus unifies ancient mythology, religious art and modern physics." ["The Tao of Physics" by Fritj of Capra] (Italics & emphasis mine).

Against this vast backdrop, let us talk about Laya in Carnatic Music. If the melodic aspect has been named after the means of wisdom (the Vedas), the rhythmic aspect has been named after the very Goal of Music. The well-worn cliché goes, "Indian Music is raga Music". But is it really? The most fundamental principle, the very bedrock of our music, is Laya. There is not a single moment in a concert when Laya is not relevant. It governs not just niraval, kalpanaswara, kriti rendering or pallavi but even raga alaapana. Bilahari, to project *aananda rasa*, must be sung fast, while Aahiri, to project *soka, rasa*, has to be slow. That apart, in any raga aalaapana, the appropriate pace(*kaalapramaana*) is vital for each phrase in order to create the desired melodic effect, whatever it may be. The great Laya yogi, the late Shri. Palghat Mani Iyer, while interpreting the adage, "Sruthi Maatha, Laya/Pitha", came out with the startling view that Sruthi is but an aspect of Laya. The more you think about it, the more it makes sense. When you sing the fundamental note at a given sruthi, what you are actually doing is to make the vocal chords vibrate at a particular *frequency*. Frequency, is defined as the *number* of vibrations per second. If you double the frequency, you get the octave. Panchama is 1.5 times the fundamental note; and every other note is a certain fraction of the fundamental note. If all this is not Laya, what is? Looked at this way, the adage is just a different way of expressing the Ardhanari Thatva, which says that Shiva is the Imperishable Absolute and Sakthi is His Active Principle.

Though it is not usually done, it is important to remember the distinction between Laya and Taala. The word is apparently derived from Taandava (Shiva's Dance) and Laasya (Sakthi's Dance) [thakaarassankara/proktho lakaarassakthi]. Taala is a convenient method of keeping the time. Taala is thus an aid to Laya.

For the great achievements in musicians' Laya manodharma, the obvious inspiration is the wealth of rhythmic beauties woven into their kritis by the great composers. But what could have been their inspiration? It is reasonable to assume that since they were steeped in religion, they were influenced by the inbuilt rhythm implicit in various devotional compositions of the Acharyas and great poets. Here are a few examples of the rhythmic structure of such works:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1) Kalidasa's Syamala Dandakam | : Several passages fit into
Adi Talam-Khanda Nadai |
| 2) Abhirami Ammal Pathikam | : Tisra Tripata - Khanda Nadai |
| 3) Vedanta Desika's Sudarsanaashtakam | : Sankima Jathi Tripata - Chatusra Nadai |
| 4) Adi Sankara's Karaavalamba Stotram | : Khanda Chapu |
| 5) Vedanta Desika's Sristuti | : Rupakam |

It is not the purpose of this paper either to dwell on the basics of the tala system or to enumerate the wide variety of compositions which are rich in special rhythmic content.

There are several varnams, krithis, chittaswarams, tilanas, tiruppugazh etc. in both common and rare talas which involve intricate arithmetic and a rigorous discipline. These are the legacy of towering intellectuals. These represent the fountainhead of inspiration for many lilting, brain-teasing pallavis and other rhythmic innovations in niraval and swara singing that musicians have been producing. The sum total of such a wealth of composed and improvised rhythm is an outstanding feature of the Carnatic system.

Having said that, it is important to emphasize that the role of Laya as the basic sheet anchor for the whole of our music is far more profound. Great musicians had realised that in krithi rendering, the kaalapramaana can make or mar raga aesthetics of the krithi and therefore spent a lot of time and energy in identifying the ideal kaalapramaana for rendering each krithi. After all the clever brain-work is over and done with, what every musician should aspire for are the poise and the mental equilibrium which can come only from a constant awareness of the deeper meaning and function of Laya.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS

Vidwan B.R.C. IYENGAR

Introduction

The Rhythm or the *tala* system in Carnatic music is most arduous to understand and elusive to follow. Byzantine, formidable, exigent, baffling, intricate, are other adjectives that can be assigned to this science. There is considerable amount of grammar and mathematics that go with it. The *tala* system in Carnatic music is such there is no comparison to it in any other system of music; at any rate that is the impression. The concept of time measure as conceived by all other systems will only form a fraction of the innumerable varieties of rhythm used in Carnatic music. It is an indisputable fact that a good section of the general audience in Carnatic music concert fail to follow the intricacies of the *tala*, much less understand the contribution of the percussion specialist. At best, most of the listeners follow the general rhythm and the cumulative effect of the teamwork. It is also commonly observed that when the percussion specialist begins to play the solo part, called *Taniyavartam*, a good section of the audience, either take it as an intermission or may even decide to go home. It certainly is not the mistake on the part of the listener; he cannot just understand it, much less follow. This is just an example of the present day scenario.

The next question is, was it the same in the past? Has there been a change in the scenario over the past 50 years, or is it stagnant? Besides this, what are the standards as compared to the past in the art and skill of the percussion players? In order to examine this, one should have virtually watched the scene live. I am one such lucky person. Let us liberally accept that there has been a continuous change in the field of art music including the art of percussion playing. This includes both ethical and academic standards.

Not only the percussive arts but also as far as art in general is concerned, we can even go so far as to say that the task increases in proportion to the profundity of the level of experience on which the relationship exists. As far as rhythm, harmony, instrumentation and the execution of details are concerned, the demands made upon the performer to day may well be more exacting than they were in the past. In art by which man expresses himself, he alone is the measure of things. Harmony of course admits of great nicety and infinite complexity. But if it is also to be expression of *spiritual experience*, if it is to pierce the heart, as it were, this complexity must not appear complicated. Rhythmical complexities too, can be considerably increased, but must be kept within natural limits, if they are to play their full and vital functions side by side with the elements of melody and harmony.

The format

I referred to some of these aspects when I presented a paper last year at the same forum on a more or less a similar subject: it was on Art music, in general. If one should examine the issue with particular reference to the percussion art, the scene is not much different. An example might help. The format of a concert has much to do in such a situation. The

concert of the past would last, on the average for four hours. To day it hardly goes beyond 120 minutes. In relation to the duration, other features that make up the format of a concert like the formal introduction of the artistes, the role of the accompanists, felicitations et al, take away good bit of time. Viewing rhythm in the present case, mridangam, considered as the essential accessory in a concert has a limited role to play. We shall examine its role as a solo, later. Consequently *tala* feature as an accompanying art, in the present day concert has also been drastically reduced. In the process the scope to portray the art has also got a beating. Again, in a long duration concert of yesteryears, the percussion expert was provided more than one opportunity to play the *taniyavartam*. To day there is no time to play a single capsule adequately. It naturally becomes a ritual and the artiste views it as a necessary evil. The other resignation is that there is no smart person in the audience to call it good or not so good.

The other aspect of the format is that the team of artistes as of to day - more or less confirmed for each artiste - is conversant with the style and skill of the main artiste as a result of relentless practice, and the entire concert is presented as a colourful pill to be swallowed. All this show of ingenuity is wasted on the listener. These rhythms become monotonous and tiring no matter how immeasurable difficult they may be in the first place to the performer. The kind of intelligence required of the performer who would master such technical difficulties is so common nowadays. It is readily acquired in training by anyone with a modicum of talent. It enables the artiste to day to play from memory the most complicated harmonies and rhythms; it is practised as an end in itself. The essential feature of *manodharma* takes a back seat. *"innocence once lost can never be regained by conscious means, for really creative powers are operative only in the state of innocence"*. The most important item of a concert, forming the *ragam*, *tanam* and *pallavi* is also rehearsed with all minute details. The difference between concert and concert is just not there. Once again, in such an effort, what is not normally possible as a spontaneous fete in a concert, can be made available to the listener as bonus, however mechanical it may eventually turn out to be. It is for the listener to choose. There are many such features that are incompatible in comparison with the old and the new.

The skill

The skill in playing the art of percussion has undergone a sea change. In this context, I wish to distinguish the skill from the art as such. To day's artiste is decidedly more intelligent academically and consequently his skill also is relatively more advanced. The thinking is fast, innovations are aggressive and enthusiasm violent. There is no patience, no relaxation. The result is a confusion in excellence. The skill overpowers the art. To distinguish the art from the skill, there is no nearer example than the playing of the maestro Mani. To day there are many that can surpass his skill but his art was different, miles away from that of the contemporary. There was a creativity which was synonymous with *sukha*, a cunning dexterity, sharpness, a ready wit and brilliance which consistently contributed to the holistic configuration of a successful concert. He knew his place and role in the team and played that part well. Never did he violate the law however tempting the situations

might have been. It is one thing to have the skill, it is entirely to put it to use.

Speaking of skill, let us examine what the percussion expert is expected to do in a concert. It is said that the function of accompanists in a concert is essentially to enhance the *sruti* component. Many do not realise that a mridangam can contribute enormously to this function. I would even say that this part of the function by mridangam is even more important than the violin. A well-tuned mridangam enhances the *naada* which in turn induces spiritualism. Spiritualism is not entirely confined to lyric; it is much more in *naada* which in itself is Divine. It is here the real skill of the percussion expert comes into effect, where skill unwittingly transforms itself into art. He must have the unique ability of identifying the spiritual from the mundane, the emotional from the academic.

Special role in a concert

There is a special role of percussion in a concert where the academic and the artistic combine to produce the classical. The convention of playing the percussion for different sections of a concert is too well known. This was religiously followed in the past. Each item in the sequence of a concert has a special role to play and playing for each of these items by the percussion specialist is different. The skill is vital here. Take for instance the *varnam*; it has a special place and time. More than the content, it plays even more important role of essentially building up the communication amongst the team in the first instance, and then, the team with the audience later, the *madhyamakala kritis* that follow, those of the slower tempo, the *ragam, tanam* and *pallavi*, all have a pivotal part to lead the percussion. The percussion expert has to be lead and not the other way about. And finally the crucial items like the *padam, javali, tillana* and even the *mangalam*; all these have a punishing control over the percussion. The question is, does this ethics exist to day? Has the contemporary expert given a thought to these, let alone practising it? The blame is squarely thrown on the present day concept of concise concert and the little scope left thereof. This is totally unacceptable.

Why not percussion be solo

There are disputes to day about the importance of the percussion. Should it all be secondary? Why only accompany, why not be independent and solo? Jolly well do it, but know where you are likely to land. Let me first refer to solo as an accompanist-the *taniyavartam*. It may be irrelevant to compare; suffice it to say that the present day *taniyavartam* is different from what it was. As already stated it is helplessly short and therefore highly orchestrated the creative part being almost nothing. The reason is-there are no takers. Accepted. What should be done to bring back the status of percussion in a concert is for all of us to ponder. Much also depends upon the expertise of the artiste to make efforts to take into his hold the listeners. Strangely this is successful when the percussion team performs abroad. Certainly the audience there, knows little or nothing of the science. It is the thrill that captivates him. Why not induce this thrill in the domestic audience? I know the case of an eminent artiste who tried to introduce a *tani* percussion concert. He collected about a dozen artistes, tuned the instruments to different *samvadi*

srutis, did *vyavaharam* for different *talas* and ended up with fascinating *thirmanams* in each of them. He held his flag high for some time, but soon it came down. Some novel experiments have also been done like playing in *tanden* with other percussion instruments like *tavil*, etc. But all these had limited success. And eventually lead to nothing. In my experience, I feel that if the percussion has not been that successful as it used to be in the past, there are two reasons. Firstly, it has grown more and more skilled job than being spiritually involved and secondly the co-ordination between the main artiste and the percussion player is growing less and less. Even in collaboration, the latter seems to be drifting away. This lacuna can be easily overcome if every percussion player learns vocal music to some extent. He must understand the subtle nuances of *gamaka*, *bhakthi*, *bhava* and induce these great features in his playing. It is easy and possible. Above all he should get over the temptation of overplaying which is the most virulent cancer to day

Teaching responsibility

In passing I wish to refer to a curious incident which left in me shocking rection. An artiste who was declared qualified from one of the Music Colleges came to me for further training and when asked to sing, she rendered a *kriti* in *rupaka tala*, which was originally set to *adi tala tisra nadi*. She was, as reported, taught that way in her college. *Talas*, originally set by great *vaggeyakaras* are changed over to suit the convenience of both the teacher and the taught. The existence of such colleges is questionable.

A word about the present day sound amplification in concerts. In March this year, in my participation in the seminar "on Sarawati veena", I listened to an interesting paper on use of contact microphones. The learned person also referred to amplifications in general. It was a revelation to me how amplifications of minute frequencies like the small movements of the body of veena leads to devastation of musical values in a concert. I am one who has listened to several concerts conducted without any amplification systems. Let me assure that I enjoyed them much better than those of to day accompanied by modern technology. The rational and sensible truth is that a concert is naturally well balanced in sound without any amplification. Amplification unnecessarily induces imbalances and in trying to set it right, it is further ruined. More often the appliances used are substandard and unsuited for the particular event. It beats my common sense why amplification is needed for an instrument like *mridangam*. Some keep the microphones for both the sides of *mridangam*! Incredible. I wonder if these artistes have listened to their own recording done by such means. There is sense in not providing amplification for *mridangam*.

When we think of *upa-pakkavadyams*, names like *Dakshinamurthy*, *Vilvadi Iyer*, *Pakkirisamy* come to our minds, none else. While *Ghatam* fortunately is surviving, *vadyams* like *Khanjari* (*kanjira*) or *moharsing* have become endangered species. *Konakkol* is almost extinct. To think of the future of all this seems to be hazardous.

All in all, the scenario to day is not that discouraging although it gives a warning of sorts. It is time artistes and art lovers wake up and do something to revive the ancient art and bring it back to its deserved glory.

ADVANCEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF TALA AND LAYA IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS

Dr. Radha Venkatachalam

The words 50 years in the topic above is significant because we have enough of details of the happenings in this half century with reliability, authenticity and proofs. What was happening to Karnatic Music in the earlier centuries is not very clear and the details available are not totally indisputable. About the very birth place of Tyagaraja (1767-1847 A.D.) there is a debate now. Some researchers aver that it was Tiruvaiyaru and not Tiruvannur as it was firmly believed till recently. India is not famous for zealous and accurate maintenance of historical data. It is all the more so in the history of music in which many loose ends continue to daunt musicologists and musicians.

It is also a fact that the developments in the field of music during and after the Trinity are many hundreds of times more than what was happening before. Many vital issues like raga classifications, Janaka & Janya relationship, lakshana of a Mela which were rather irrational and unsettled became to be consolidated and standardized only in the period just preceding the Trinity era. This situation became well established by the contribution of the Trinity and posterity till today stands to benefit by the rich legacy left behind by them. In this century the availability of technological facilities have further helped to seat our music on a solid pedestal perceivable by people at large.

It is, however, to be noted that the *area of Laya and Tala has not had enough exposure as was the case in the field of Ragas and Kritis*. It is just because of this that a chunk of the audience make a bee-line to the exit gate the moment Tani Avartanam starts. Many listeners say that they don't "Understand" anything in a Tani Avartanam and so are not able to enjoy it, as if they had "Understood" everything in the Raga and Kritis portion in a concert. *Books exclusively on Talas are comparatively smaller in number and even in them the contents are dry and mechanical*. Even musicians do not find them intelligible leave alone being interesting. **Laya is the life and essence of Tala** but the books seem to specialise only on the latter that too concentrating more upon quantity by explaining a large number of talas irrelevant and non-essential for practical music. The authors of these books might not have been good singers or performers.

Widening of the awareness for tala and its arithmetic has, however, had its own rate of growth among practicing musicians and atleast a minority among listeners. Until a few decades back expertise in tala was being utilised as a weapon to threaten accompanists and awe the audience. Pallavi contests were in vogue right from Syama Sastry's days and they were more frequent during Patnam Subramanya Iyer and Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan's days. Professor Sambamoorthy has written in great detail about the contest

between Syama Sastry and Bobbili Kesavayya at the Tanjore Court. He has even said that the kriti "Devi Brova Samayamide" in Chintamani raga was composed by Syama Sastry the previous night before the contest and he has further gone to explain that the music of that kriti, the tempo and the sahitya, all are reflective of the rather uneasy mind of the composer wondering how he would meet the challenge the next morning. The raga "Chintamani" seems to have been arrived at as a Chayalaga or Sankeema raga by Syama Sastry because of his confused state of mind. He, however, is reported to have won the contest by retorting Bobbili Kesavayya's Simhanandana Pallavi with a mind-boggling Sarabhanandana Talam with a total tala units of 79 that is not divisible by any other number. Simhanandana is a talam that finds a place in books but not Sarabhanandanam. Any fair-minded person would have asked how Syama Sastry could create a talam of an entirely new combination of angas out of his own imagination and stun Bobbili Kesavayya who sang a tala of accepted constitution. So was the case with Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan also. V.S. Gomati Sankaranyar, the biographer of Maha Vaidyanathan Sivan has given some Pallavi's in notation. They were said to have been sung by the vidwan in Pallavi Contest. The notation of some of the Pallavis exceeds a full page of printed matter which can equal a medium size kriti of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. The author has also mentioned that Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan Indulged in totally new talas made of his own combination of the six angas. Here again, an impartial person may question the right of Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan to frame his own talas which must have naturally been Bolt from the Blue for his opponents. To Combine the six angas in various ways and formulate different talas is a job that a computer can do in seconds these days though the machine can not sing in them. Any person of an above average intelligence can create a lot of combinations of the six angas and name them as different Talas. Where and what is the limit to this exercise is a question not asked and answered till today. The towering image of Syama Sastry and Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan was such that their new creations of Talas were listened to without anybody daring to ask for the sources. Of the six angas of talas prevalent in those days three have faced a process of natural extinction and today's musicians are blissfully free from those laboured efforts. An inexhaustive ocean of imagination & skill is possible with the three angas-Laghu, Drutam and Anudrutam and the other three - Guru, Plutam and Kakapadam - which should interest only the musicologists and musicologists are not necessary in these days of accelerated life-style.

Pallavi contests must have themselves been a sort of aberration to satisfy the sadistic urges of pseudo-patrons and pseudo-scholars of those days. With all the facilities of mega-media to-day listeners are still unable to stand and understand a Tani Avartanam, how many would have been able to appreciate a Sarabhanandana pallavi hundred years ago? Who would have dared to give an opinion between Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan and Patnam Subramanya Iyer? These contests were the result of the long leisure and lack of other activity among people of those days. A few on-lookers must have assembled just to

watch the fun and not for any serious listening of music. The situation worsened in the succeeding generations. Prof. Sambamoorthy has not hesitated to classify musicians as Pallavi vidwans and Soukhya vidwans, giving room to the inappropriate view that those who specialize in Laya are not capable of 'pleasing' music and vice-versa. It that were true, Gopala Iyer with the word 'Pallavi' pre-fixed to his name could not have composed Ata tala varnams brimming with raga bhava. It is, of course, a fact that a tribe of musicians who branded themselves as tala experts existed all through and they won recognition more out of fear than out of respect and appreciation. Most of them who were veritable terrorists among musicians had very poor voices and Pallavis and other dry tala exercises were their refuge.

At the turn of this century music acquired a new high status as a profession of commercial viability. The advent of radio and access to music-related entertainments like dramas and cinemas generated a new proletariat sort of class of listeners who could get access to classical music in democratic set-ups like Sabhas which helped to bring music into the mainstream of the common man's life. Classical music was brought to the masses who became the paymasters. Pleasing them was the main concern of performers who have by now tasted economic prosperity. The motely crowds would have surely not loved to listen to a Sarabhanandana Pallavi! The food for their appetite was something more easily digestible while still being in the limits of classicism. The Kritis came in handy to both the musicians and the listeners. *Filling concerts with Kritis began at this time.* Upto Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan's days concerts consisted mainly of a Pallavi and just a two or three of other items. The process of Kritis usurping the pride of place of Pallavis continued unabated, culminating into a stage when pallavis just disappeared from the concert repertoire gradually though. Only a handful of Tyagaraja's and Dikshitar's Kritis were in vogue in the nineteenth century and *Kriti-hungry listeners of the twentieth century made the fame-hungry musicians work overtime to unearth so many of the Kritis of the Trinity from the palm-leaves and other Sishyaparamparas to feed the need of the new generation of listening masses.* *Acquiring and knowing more number of Kritis* became to be considered a great merit. Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar was glorified as having a huge stock of Kritis. Sixty of them in Todi alone! This was in sharp contrast with the star performer of the earlier generation Madurai Pushpavanam (uncle of Madurai Mani Iyer) who was mesmerising audiences with his captivating voice and a repertoire of hardly 20 songs in all!

After reaching abysmal depths and discuse of unpopularity the Pallavis have seen an era of resurgence only in last decade or two, thanks to the efforts of a few Samaritans who were tired of the mediocrity that had ruled the field with a large number of shallow musicians who could not do anything more than reciting Kritis and a show of tame manodharma. *The current situation in the field of music is one that can be called the Pallavi renaissance era.* One plus point with the present generation of young musicians is that they are all of

good general education and they can atleast **understand the technique of talas and Pallavis** though not all of them being able to sing them successfully.

The correct implication of the words TALA and LAYA is a very rarely understood matter even among persons of the music fraternity. *Laya is Universal and Tala is a local. Laya is an ocean and Tala is a measure. Laya is the basic pulse-rate and Tala only an indicator. Laya is in-born and Tala is acquirable.* Tala is concrete and can be shown in written notation but laya cannot be seen but must be felt. There can be musicians showing the angas of Talas perfectly while deviating from the basis Laya. There may also be a few singing or playing in perfect Laya, but forgetting an anga or two of a Tala. Between these two the latter can be given a margin and excuse. A full explanation of the two terms would need a separate paper. We will dwell at it here in a small measure.

The Pallavis of the Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan's days would seem to have long and unwieldy involving more labour than bhava or brain. The *physical difficulty* level like having to *show the various gestures* of the different angas in the *Talas of marathon length* was the awe inspiring factor. The sheer length of the Tala and the concern of correctly executing the angas is sure to rob the attention of the singer leaving very little scope for aesthetic appeal. A giant like Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan might perhaps have been able to sing even a Simhanandana Pallavi with ease because of his rich acumen and severe practice. It is no doubt a big achievement but the demand of the high technical exercise is very likely to prove a handicap in paying due attention to Bhava evocativeness - which is the Chief ingredient of good music. The labour involved should not be the main criterion in evaluating a music. This does not either mean that things achieved with small effort should constitute good music. A judicious combination of various factors like a reasonably high difficulty level, due bhava and facility for singing with abandon can only make a music of classical seriousness. In the post Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan era the accent got shifted to another type of laborious effort in the form of Pallavis of 32 Kalais, 16 Kalais, 8 Kalais etc. *Konerajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer and Kancheepuram Nayana Pillai* of this period were specialising in Pallavis of 8 and more Kalais. It is also to be noted here that both of them *renunciated their dry pursuit of Tala specialisation and turned into seeking Nadopasakas* in the latter part of their career. They must have got tired of their labour with tough tala exercises and found refuge in the bhava laden Kritis of Tyagaraja. The attempt at laya exercises was brought down to a manageable level only from the days of **Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar whose command over four Kalai Pallavis was both intelligible and awe inspiring.** Almost all the contemporaries were also adepts in doing masterly Niraval in four Kalai Pallavis. The pace of human life today has no space to spare even for four Kalai and two Kalai Pallavis and Kritis have come to stay, leaving all the previous laya exercises as museum pieces. Giants like Laigudi Jayaraman, T.R. Subramanyam, Balamurali Krishna, Veena S. Balachander, T.N. Seshagopalan etc. have proved that *wonders can be worked with sky as the limit even in two kalai pieces* and results much

higher than what is obtained in the laborious exercises of the previous eras is possible in the less leisurely paces too. The fallacy that attention towards *laya intricacies will affect the melody part of music has been belied* by these maestros. This wrong placement of laya against melody must have been propagated only by those musicians of inadequate grip with laya and their lack of requisite intelligence to innovate in talas.

Let us now examine the **contemporary scene**. The plus points now are indeed heartening. Almost all the artistes on the right side of forty today are well educated and *they have all the brain though not the brawn of indulging in all healthy innovations in the arena of laya. Employing intelligence in the mathematics of tala exercises, rather than attempting them solely by intuition is an encouraging feature* today. Some of them have the tendency to even go too far by singing Korvais of mind-boggling length and intricacies. Making use of arresting techniques like Gopuchcha and Srotovaha Yatis in various combinations is widely prevalent today. **Such healthy ventures were very limited before advent of Palghat Mani Iyer.** The impact of his innovations has continued till today with improvement and enlargement from generation to generation. The tendency in the Nayana Pillai era was to assume a rather boisterous and crude attitude with loud beating of the tala and harsh execution of svaras while exhibiting arithmetic based svara korvais. For best results this need not be so. A popular saying among aestheticians is "Art conceals Art". This should apply to literature, oration, painting and music too. It means that there should be more of impactful suggestiveness than loud assertiveness in these arts. Intricate calculated svara kalpana must be handled by a maestro with such a finesse and ease that it should look deceptively simple, making even knowledgeable people wonder how high technique has blended beautifully with the general run of melody. A waterfall, for instance, is capable of generating electricity but a common man is carried away by the natural beauty of the flow of water little caring to know that it generates electric energy too. *As against the hard beating of the tala of yester years the tendency among many youngsters today is to make the beats of the Tala too soft disqualifying it for the epithet Sasabdakriya.* This habit leads to a loose awareness of laya-suddha. The bane today among vocalists, violinists and percussionists is of the scant respect for **laya-suddha**. The correctness of laya is grossly misunderstood as correctness in the execution of korvais and landings with reference to the tala. When a Kriti is started the very second sangati in it assumes a different laya with many performers, today. Even when the main artiste sings on an even keel the percussionists contribute to disturb the laya and pull the former too into his grue. *Ideally a mridangist should be specifically given training and exposure to a variety of kalapramanams* but most of them spend all their time and energy in pedantic and showy teermanas and korvais at the cost of due awareness for laya. The malady lies in the penchant among main artiste for brisk paces rather than reposeful vilamba kala Kritis. Performers generally get used to a particular tempo be it Adi tala, Misra or Khanda Chapu Talas. A deliberate attempt to offer kritis of a *variety of kalapramanams* was said to have

been a *great merit in the concert plan of Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar*. Even granting that a vocalist has an awareness for laya there is no guarantee that he/she can sing in all the Tempi for want of a requisite felicity in voice and physical energy. Percussionists for their turn get used to a certain Kalapramanam only and are not able to cope up with unfamiliar tempi. Many of them resort to pulling down the kalapramanam to their convenience while launching the Tani avarthanam. During junctures of clash of kalapramanams between vocalist and percussionists it is difficult to isolate who has been on the wrong. *A big boon of the veterans of the pre-Palghat Mani-days was that their play blended beautifully and rested well on the kalapramanam of the main performer.* May be the doyens were not so efficient with the mathematical pyro techniques available today but their accompaniment was sure to be of great comfort to the main artiste. It can in short be said that the present day artistes are concerned more with the tala and arithmetic than with the vital ingredient laya. This can be applied to even starry artistes.

In the area of Pallavis and Svarakalpana **stunning innovations are heard and seen today**. Pallavis with more than one Nadai, Kuraippu in Svarakalpana too in more than one nadai, the very 'aas' of the Pallavi employing more than one speed, employment of Chatusra-tisra rendition, mridangists employing Teermanams blending with the rhythmic set up of any part of the song and also land dramatically at a pivotal point-not necessarily on the Sama alongwith the main artiste - all these are **welcome innovations**. The Upapakka Vadyas have proliferated remarkably in the recent times. There are main artistes who insist upon an Upapakka Vadya in their concert even in concerts of short duration. It is also a fact that sometimes the sound of the Upapakka Vadyas, particularly Morsing and Ghatam are much more musical than that of the mridangam. There are star mridangists who tactfully avoid appearing with outshining Ghatam and Kanjira players.

In sum, **the present situation in the field of Tala and Laya can safely be called one of satisfaction and progressiveness**. It has got refined from some of the coarseness associated with it in the earlier generations. Lot of brain work has been infused into it. One area where there is urgent need for reformation and resurrection is an overall upkeep and **respect for Laya Prajna which is mostly God given** and man can only nurture it by making youngsters to listen keenly and carefully to the tapes or records of the old maestros at their best preferably in company with an enlightened Guru. Knowledge of vocalist-material in an average mridangist today is much more than that of the main artiste about the Laya Vadyas. A rather unhealthy trend in the recent times among percussionists is to demand an undue exclusive attention to them in a concert even eclipsing the main artiste. Youngsters should be cautioned against such misleads. It is not impossible for a best player to draw due attention without undue demands for it. On the other hand it is easy for a mediocre player to resort to cheap gimmicks and playing for the gallery. Good gurus can and must train the learners to tell the grain from the chaff.

50 YEARS - PERCUSSION MUSIC

Sangeetha Kalaarathna Bangalore K. Venkataram

50th year of Celebration, Golden Jubilee of any organisation is a very notable landmark. This also happens to be the 50th year of Independence of our Nation. It is thus a Unique occasion. We can take stock of memories of what has been done and also examine what we could do in future, where we could have done better and how. This is also the occasion for planning our programmes for the future, based on our past achievements and present experience.

I would like to reminisce the events in this period, in the field of Percussive Arts. That was the period when Venu Naicker (1946), Tanjore Vaidyanatha Iyer (1947) parted from us. We still had Needamangalam Meenakhisundaram Pillai (1949), Tanjore Ramadasa Rao (1961), Palani Subramanya Pillai (1962), Umayalapuram Kodandarama Iyer (1966), Saakkottai Rangu Iyengar, Shaathapuram Subba Iyer (1968), Devakottai Sundararaja Iyengar (1970), Vellore Gopalachari (1971) and others thrived. This Quarter Century (25 years from 1947 - 1972) marked the existence of such stalwarts.

In the next Quarter Century (25 years from 1972 to 1997), We had Alangudi Ramachandran (1975), Morsing Natesa Pillai (1975), Thinniam Venkatarama Iyer (1976), Thiruvilwamalai S. Vilwadi Iyer (1974), Palghat Mani Iyer (1981), H. Puttacher (1981), Kunjuman - Tanjore Krishna Murthy Rao - Ramnad Eswaran (1984), Coimbatore Ramaswamy (1986), T. Ranganathan (1987), Mavalikere Krishnan Kutty Nair (1988), K.S. Manjunathan - M.L. Veerabhadraiah (1989), Tanjore Upendran (1991), Krishnamani (1992), Palghat Sundaram (1994), K.M. Vaidyanathan (1994) and others.

Later on, We lost Ramanathapuram C.S. Murgabhupathy (1998).

In Mysore City and Old Mysore State, Tabla was profusely in use, even for Karnatak Classical Music, both for Vocal and Instrumental in all concerts. It was Muthuswamy Thevar (1931) whose Mrudanga play introduced a fresh chapter in the field of Percussive Arts. Later his son T.M. Venkatesha Thevar (1963) and T.M. Puttaswamiah (1984) were the known exponents of Mridanga. H. Puttacher (1898 - 1981), C.K. Ayyamani Iyer (1908-1976) and later on M.L. Veerabhadraiah (1914-1989), H.P. Ramachar, M.S. Ramaiah and others continued this tradition. H. Puttacher was also playing Tabla only earlier and changed over to Mridanga. D. Seshappa, a well known Tabla artist continued to provide his Tabla accompaniment to all concerts, Vocal and Instrumental. I happened to listen to "Joyn" (ಜಾಯ್) sound similar to the Murching or the pluck of a Veena sound, instead of "Coom" (ಕೂಮ್) sound of Tabala for the first time when C.K. Ayyamani Iyer played his mridanga at the "Thyagarajothsava" organised by L.S. Seshagiri Rao (1984) himself a versatile artist of several instruments like Violin, Nagaswara, Mridanga, Khanjari, Dolu etc., for the Mysore

Sangeetha Sabha at the Kannada Sahithya Parishanmandira. It was with M.L. Veerabhadraiah, we had occasions to listen to such high quality mridangams; he used to get Pharland, Shetty and other expert instrument manufacturers from Tanjore and Palghat for the manufacture, replacements and repairs of Mridangas. A lot of expenditure would be involved in getting these artisans by way of travel - Boardings & Lodging - evening drinks etc., in addition to their normal wages! I used to get my mridangams repaired there only. In those days, my guru K.S. Manjunathan and colleague A.V. Anand used to visit one Venkatappa near the Super Talkies in Cottonpet for all our regular requirements then; his successor M.R. Rangaswamy is one of the expert makers - cum - repairers now, who is himself a versatile mridangam accompanist to Dance recitals.

In those days, the number of Sabhas were very limited. Thyagarajotsava and Ramothsava were the only two major occasions, Celebrations of Purandara Punya Thithi and Thyagaraja Aradhanas came in to vogue very much later only. In these concerts, the Gayakas - Vadakas used to dominate, and some times even trying to test the knowledge and competence of the accompanists. Support and encouragement to sidemen were very inadequate. The role of accompanists was just to support the main artists and only to enhance the quality of the concert by their individual sustained accompanying support.

Tanjore Vaidyanatha Iyer (1947), Tanjore Ramadasa Rao (1961), Kumbakonam Rangu Iyengar (---), Mylattoor Sami Iyer (---), Karaikudi Mutthu Iyer (1977), were all well known for their ability to provide excellent melodic support to the Main artistes. The Left and Right (Thoppi and Valanthalai) synchronization to produce aesthetic rhythmic support is still remembered by old timers. Earlier to them, noted artistes like Azagunambi (Alaganambi) were never involved in intricate "Thadiginathomus at all; in between the Song sections and song interludes, they used to play individually ("Thani") for an "Avartha" and with the left and rights aesthetic blend mixed with Chapu, Arai Chapu, Dhim and Gumkara they elicited encomiums and applause. Thus the term "Thani avartha" had evolved; now we don't know how many series of avarthas we play, on Laya Vadyas! Still it is named "Thani avartha" which is nothing but "Laya Vinyasa".

On the advice of our noted art critic B.V.K Sastry the then Station Director of All India Radio P.Dharmagnani arranged to record our Veteran T.M. Puttaswamalah who had already aged, at his residence in Thirumakudlu. This was done by with Vidwan M.Venkateshachar's vocal with the staff and equipment of the Akashavani Studios of Mysore and preserved in the archives of the AIR. The mud-made-mridanga was shown and he played on this; explained the style and contents of mridanga play of those days.

Entry of the great mestro Palghat Mani Iyer (1981) in the music scenario brought out a renaissance in the Percussive Artistry.

The prestige of percussion accompanists, especially Mridangam Artists, support, recognition, honours and even the remunerations, all increased and established a new era for the Percussion artistry. Along with Palani Subramanya Pillai (1962) and C.S.Murugabhoopathy (1998), the playing techniques, quality of improved instrumentation, recognisable high level of improvements in the Quality of accompaniment - changed the entire State-of-art. With the advent of Palghat Mani Iyer, a new era was created. Importance to and role of Laya Vadyas measured and rated very high.

The Development of instrumentation also improved; lot of Research, however, is yet to undergo to fulfill the requirements of Leathers & Woods of the requisite quality in the required quantities. Layavaadyakaaras of today definitely, without doubt, have attained a very high degree of state-of-art compared to earlier generations. However, when it comes to recognition of these Laya Vaadya Kaaras much more is desired to be done. AIR has played a vital role in recognising this criteria and it is perhaps the only organisation in the Nation to invite Percussion artistes regularly and pay them similar remunerations for similarly graded artistes.

A few words regarding the Solo opportunities for Karnatak Percussions. In all major Hindustani Music festivals, there are invariably solo recitals of Tabala and Pakhwaj. Despite the highly developed sophisticated state-of-art there are no such occasions for solo items - Laya Vinyasas for Mridangam. This was taken up about 18 years back by the Percussive Arts centre with the AIR who expressed their view that AIR cannot be an academic body. After several such solo percussions were organised in public concerts, exclusive percussive solos are now provided for Karnatak Music also.

Mridangam was the only percussion in those days, though sporadic occasions were there with Ghatam Sundaram Iyer, Khanjira Dakshina Murthy Pillai (1936), Morching Natesa Pillai, Konakkoal Pakkiri and others in some concerts of artistes like Nayana Pillai. Dolak Balappa was included in D.K. Pattammal's concerts. Lady artistes like M.S.Subbulakshmi and M.L.Vasanthakumari had Ghatam Vilvadi Iyer, Alangudi, K.M.Vaidyanathan and Khanjira V.Nagarajan, H.P.Ramachar and others. Chittoor Subramanya Pillai used to have a full bench, as it was called, including the Gethu and later Madurai Somu had such a team. B.Devendrappa of Mysore used to have a large number of Percussions for support.

Mysore Palace had Laigudi Rama Iyer (1867), Laigudi Guruswamy Iyer for Ghatam. Later Vilvadi Iyer (1974), Alangudi (1975), K.M.Vaidyanathan (1994), Kothandarama Iyer (1966), Umayalapuram Narayanaswamy, K.S.Manjunathan and N.L.Seetharama Sastry were featured for Ghatam. Around 1946, Radio was still a luxury. My Guru K.S.Manjunathan had a room rented at the Rameshwara Temple in the 4th Road, Chamarajapet, Bangalore, in the corner of which road was a Laundry where we used to huddle to listen to AIR broadcasts! Then Madras featured concerts from 7.45 to 9.00 PM on Fridays and 8.15 to 9.00 PM (for Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi)

on Tuesday some time relayed from Trichy. There used to be Ghatam accompaniments of Vilvadi Iyer for Veena recitals in those days. Veena artistes from Mysore like R.S.Keshava Murthy, V.Doreswamy Iyengar, R.N. Doraiswamy and others used to be featured in these concerts. There was no question of tuning the Ghatam at all. In 1955 T.N. Raja Rathnam Pillai played with Tambura Shruthi at the Ramaseva Mandali, Chamrajpet at the City Institute. Pandal relayed from Mysore AIR (there was no AIR in Bangalore then). That was the time when my Ghatam was noticed and tuned to bring down the pitch by external application of beeswax. K.S.Manjunathan (1989) was the first to get very special Ghatams manufactured for different shruthis in different sizes. He had more than 150 Ghatams for selection. K.S.Manjunathan played in Japan in the Expo-70 for a Solo recital, unaccompanied; for an illiterate this is still a record not yet beaten. Later Vinayakram got the grammy award, Central Akademi award and last year the Music Academy "Sangeetha Kalacharya".

Sosale Ramadas was a noted Khanjari player of our place. Devakottai Sundararaja Iyengar, Ramamruthm, Kandanur Bangaru Iyer were also known Khanjari players. Sosale Seshagiri Das of AIR was a Kanjira Artist of our place. It was H.P.Ramachar who made special efforts to develop the instrument by resorting to instruments of different sizes of higher diameters and other techniques. G.Harishankar is today one of the versatile Kanjira players.

Lakshmanacharya of Mysore was an old Morching player. Mannargudi Natesa Pillai, Erode Mahadevan, T.K.Vayyapuri Thevar were also known Morching Artistes. L.Bheemachar is at present a senior Morching player and his son B.Rajashekar has acquired National fame.

Efforts have been made in these 1½ decades to establish the Independent personalities of the Laya Vaadyas. With the improved state-of-art and instrumental techniques, our percussion instruments are very superior to western Drums. Indian Drums have a lot of variety. Exclusive compositions for Laya vaadyas are yet to be composed, though efforts have been made in this direction by Gnan Prakash Ghosh, Dr.Vijayaraghava Rao and others. Several audio cassettes like Swara Laya Mela, Thala Vaadya kacheri-T.H.Vinayakaram, Thala Vadya (T.K.Murthy), Garland of Rhythms (Umayalpuram Shivaraman), Laya Sudha (Te.Ve.Gopalakrishnan), Laya Chita (Karaikudi Mani), Thala Tharangini (T.A.S.Mani), Laya Lahari (Ayyanar College of Music, Laya Vrushti (Percussive Arts Centre) are some of the audios brought out. Laya Vrushti which has used only Laya Vaadyas for the entire cassette is unique in this way.

There are divergent opinions on Fusion Music. K.C.P. - TAS Mani and Ramamani have made some efforts in this direction. Fusion attempts have also been made by versatile youngsters like Shivu - Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma and others who have experimented using Electronic gadgets, Rhythm composers and computerised Music.

It would be worth while recalling the great musicians whom we have lost in this period. In the first quarter century (1947-1972) - we lost Sabesha Iyer (1948), Needamangalam Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai (1949), Tigoor Varadachar (1950-51), Hulugur Krishnacharya (1951), Veena Venkatagiriappa (1951), Bangalore Nagarathnamma (1952), T.N.Rajaratnam Pillai (1956), Palghat Rama Bhagavathar (1957), Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer, T.V.Subba Rao (1958), M.K.Thyagaraja Bhagavathar (1959), Mysore Vasudevacharya and T.N. Swaminatha Pillai (1961), Palladam Sanjeeva Rao (1962), Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu (1964), Alathur Subba Iyer and G.N.B (1965), B.K. Padmanabha Rao and Arunachalappa (1966) Annaswamy Bhagavathar - Adiyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar - T.Chowdaiah (1967), Madurai Mani and Marungapuri Gopala Krishna Iyer (1968), Rajamanikam Pillai - Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer - L.S.Narayanawamy Bhagavathar - Sir C.V. Raman (1970), H.Y. Yoganarasimhan (1971), Papa Venkataramiah, D.Subba Ramaiah - T.Gururajappa (1972).

In the next Quarter Century - 1973 to 1997, we lost M.D. Ramanathan. Papanasam Shivan, Professor P.Sambamurthy (1973), Ramnad Krishnan - Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar - Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (1974), Chittoor Subramanya Pillaimusiri Subramanya Iyer - Mudicondon Venkatarama Iyer - B. Subba Rao (1975) - Thinniyam Venkatarama Iyer (1976), Karaikudi Muthu Iyer and Sathur A.G. Subramanyan (1977), B.S. Raja Iyengar - 1978, Mayavaram Govindaraja Pillai - 1979, Lalgudi Gopala Iyer - T.K. Rangachari - (1979) Alathur Srinivasa Iyer - Rangaramnuja Iyengar - K. Sundarambal (1980), R.S.Keshava Murthy (1982), M.D.Ramanathan - John Higgins - N.Channakeshavaiah - Ramanad Eshwaran (1984), Chinthalapalli Ramachandra Rao - Manchala Jagannatha Rao (1985), Flute T.R.Mahalingam - S.Chandrapa - P.Bhuvaneshwariah - V.Devendrappa - Salem Desikan (1986), Devakottai Narayana Iyengar - Emani Sankara Shastry (1987) - Seerkazhi Govindarajan - Dr.S Ramanathan (1988), Madurai Somasundaram - Voleti Venkateshwaralu (1989), S. Balachander - M.L.Vasantha Kumari - B.N. Suresh (1990), D.K. Jayaraman - Tanjore Upendran (1991), C.Honnappa Bhagavatha - Maharajapuram Santhanam (1992), R.K. Venkatarama Sastry (1993), K.M.Vaidyanathan - Sandhyavandanam Sreenivasa Rao - S.Kalyana Raman (1994), Anoor Ramakrishna (1995), T. Ekambaram (1996).

This is a Galaxy of stars we have lost during this Half a century. There may be many omissions by oversight.

I have tried to bring back my memories, as I remembered these.

BANGALORE K.VENKATARAM

24-5-98 ರಂದು ನಡೆದ ಸತ್ಕಾರ ಸಮಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕಲಾರತ್ನ

ಬಿ.ವಿ.ಕೆ. ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿಗಳ ಬಾಷಣ

ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಹಾಡ್‌ಹಳ್ಳಿ ರಾಮಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರೇ, ನ್ಯಾಯಮೂರ್ತಿ ನಿಟ್ಟೂರು ಶ್ರೀನಿವಾಸರಾಯರೇ, ವೇದಿಕೆಯ ಮೇಲಿರುವ ಎಲ್ಲ ಗಣ್ಯರೇ ಮತ್ತು ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕಲಾಭಿಮಾನಿಗಳೇ,

ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತನಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾಗ ಹಾಡ್‌ಹಳ್ಳಿಯವರೂ ಒಂದು ಮಾತು ಹೇಳಿದರು: ಈ ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯಗಳನ್ನೆಲ್ಲ ಕೊಡಲು ನಿಮ್ಮಂಥವರು ಬೇಕು, ನನ್ನಂಥವರಲ್ಲ. ಇದು ಹೇಗೆ ಅಂದರು. ಏಕೆ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೀನೆಯೆಂದರೆ "ಮಾಡೆಸ್ಟಿ" (Modesty) ಎಂದು ನಾವು ಏನು ಹೇಳುತ್ತೀವಿ ಅದು ಸುಸಂಸ್ಕೃತರ ಲಕ್ಷಣ. ಹಾಡ್‌ಹಳ್ಳಿ ರಾಮಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರು ಈ ತಮ್ಮ ಒಂದು ವಾಕ್ಯದಲ್ಲೇ ಅವರು ಎಷ್ಟು ಸುಸಂಸ್ಕೃತರು, ತಮ್ಮಲ್ಲಿ ಎಷ್ಟೇ ಅರ್ಹತೆ ಇದ್ದರೂ ಸುಸಂಸ್ಕೃತರು ಹೇಳಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ನಾನು ಇನ್ನೂ ಬೆಳೆಯಬೇಕಾದವನು ಎಂಬ ಭಾವನೆ; ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ಇಂದು ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷತೆ ವಹಿಸಲು ಅವರಿಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಅರ್ಹವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ನನಗೆ ಯಾರೂ ಕಾಣಿಸುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ರಾಜಕೀಯದಲ್ಲಿರುವವರು (ರಾಜಕೀಯಕ್ಕೂ ಸುಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಗೂ ಬಹಳ ದೂರ) ಇಂಥಹ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳು ರಾಜಕೀಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ನಮ್ಮ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಕೂಡ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಸಹಕಾರಿಯಾಗಿ ಬಲಪಡಿಸುವ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಅವರದು ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಬಹುದು. ಇನ್ನು ನನ್ನ ಪರಿಚಯ ಮಾಡಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಒಂದು ವಿಷಯ ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಈ ಪರ್‌ಫಾರ್ಮೆನ್ಸ್ ಆರ್ಟ್ ಸೆಂಟರ್ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುವಾಗ ನನ್ನ ಪಾತ್ರದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ, ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಸ ವಿಷಯ ಏನಿಲ್ಲ. ನಮಗೆ ಎಷ್ಟೋ ಕಲ್ಪನೆಗಳೂ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯಗಳೂ ಇರುತ್ತವೆ. ನಮ್ಮ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಗತ ಮಾಡಲು ಆಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಯಾರಾದರೂ ಕಾರ್ಯಗತ ಮಾಡುವ ಸಾಧ್ಯತೆ ಇರುವವರು ಸಿಕ್ಕಿದರೆ ನಮಗೂ ಸಂತೋಷ. ಹೇಳಿಮಾಡಿದಂತೆ ಆಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಕೆಲಸ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ನಿರ್ದರ್ಶನವಾಗಿ ನಾನು ಈ ಊರಿಗೆ ಬಂದ ಹೊಸತರಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ರೀತಿಯ ನಿರಾಶಾಭಾವನೆ ತುಂಬಿತ್ತು. ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಯಾರೂ ಕೇಳುವವರಲ್ಲ, ನಮ್ಮಿಂದ ಏನೂ ಪ್ರಯೋಜನವಿಲ್ಲ, ನಮಗೆ ಬೆಲೆಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲ - ಎನ್ನುವ ಥರಹ. ನನಗೆ ಆಗಿನಿಂದಲೂ ಇಷ್ಟೇ ಇದ್ದದ್ದು. ಯಾವ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ನೀವು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಇದ್ದೀರೀ? ನೀವೇ ವ್ಯವಹಾರ ಶೀಲರಾಗಬೇಕು. ನೀವೇ ಮುನ್ನುಗ್ಗಬೇಕು. ಬೇರೆಯವರು ಅಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಿಲ್ಲ ಎನ್ನುವ ಬದಲು ನೀವೇ ಒಂದು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಕಟ್ಟಿ. ನಾಲ್ಕು ಜನರನ್ನು ಕರೆದು ಕಲೆ ಉದ್ಘರಣೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಿ. ಏಕೆ ಆಗಬಾರದು? ಆ ರೀತಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಗಾನಕಲಾ ಪರಿಷತ್ತು ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಆದದ್ದು. ಅದರ ಮೊದಲ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿಯಾಗಿ ವೆಂಕಟರಾಂ ಅವರು ಎಷ್ಟು ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯದಿಂದ ಆ ಕಾರ್ಯವನ್ನು ನಿಭಾಯಿಸಿ ಆ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಕಟ್ಟಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುತ್ತಾ ಅವಕಾಶವಾದರು ಅನ್ನುವುದು ನಮ್ಮಂಥವರಿಗೆ, ಅಲ್ಲಿದ್ದವರಿಗೆ, ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕವಾಗಿ ಆ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಬೆಳೆದಿರುವುದನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದಾಗ ಅರಿವಾಗುವ ವಿಷಯ. ಮುಂದೆ ಇದೇ ವಿಷಯ ಮತ್ತೆ ಬಂತು. ತಾಳ-ಲಯಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟದ್ದು. ನಾನು ಈ ಊರಿಗೆ ಬಂದ ಹೊಸತರಲ್ಲಿ; ನನಗೆ ಈಗಲೂ ನಗು ಬರುತ್ತದೆ. ನಾನು ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬರೆಯುವಾಗ ಕೊನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಾಳವಾದ್ಯದವರಿಗೆ ಒಂದು ನಾಲ್ಕು ನಾಲ್ಕು ಬರೆದು ಮುಗಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆ. ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇದು ಒಂದು ಪದ್ಯತಿ, ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂತ ಅಲ್ಲ. ಏನಾದರೂ ಆಗಾಗ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ತಪ್ಪು ಆಗಬಹುದು. ವೆಂಕಟರಾಂ ಬಿಡುತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ತಕ್ಷಣ ಸಂಪಾಕರಿಗೆ ಕಾಗದ ಬರೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು: ಸಂಪಾಕರಿಗೆ ಬರೆಯುವುದಲ್ಲದೆ ನನಗೂ ಕಾಗದದ ಪ್ರತಿಯನ್ನು ಕಳುಹಿಸಿ ಈ ರೀತಿ ಕಳುಹಿಸಿದ್ದೀನಿ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಅದೇನು ಮುಚ್ಚು ಮರೆ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಅಂದರೆ ಸುಮ್ಮನೆ ಇರುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಇವರಿಗೆ ಆ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ತೀವ್ರವಾದ ಆಸಕ್ತಿ ಇರುವುದು ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಭವವಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಆ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಇವರಿಗೆ ಹೇಳಿದ್ದೆ.

ತಾಳವಾದ್ಯ-ಪಕ್ಕವಾದ್ಯದವರು ತಾಳ-ಲಯ ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಗೌರವ, ಸ್ಥಾನ, ಮರ್ಯಾದೆ ಇಲ್ಲ, ಅದರ ಇಲ್ಲ - ಎಂದು ಏಕೆ ಅಂದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು. ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಒಂದು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಕಟ್ಟಿದರೆ ಆಯಿತು. ಜನಗಳಿಗೆ ತಾಳ-ಲಯ ವಿಷಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಆಗಿರದವೇನಿಲ್ಲ, ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅದರ ಪರಿಚಯ ಹಾಗೂ ಅನುಭವ ಸಾಲದು. ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅದು ಅರ್ಥವಾಗುವುದು ಕಷ್ಟ. ಗಾಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ಒದಗುವ ಅನುಭವ ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಕಷ್ಟ. ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಪಳಗಬೇಕು. ಅದು ಪರಿಚಯಮಾಡಿಸಲು ಒಂದು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಬೇಕು ಎಂದು. ತಕ್ಷಣವೇ ಈ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಿದರು. ಈ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನು ಹೇಳಬೇಕಾದುದು ಏನೆಂದರೆ, ನಾನು ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸಂಗೀತ ನಾಟಕ ಅಕಾಡೆಮಿಯಲ್ಲೆ, ಎರಡು ಭಾರಿ ಸದಸ್ಯನಾಗಿದ್ದೆ. ಇಡೀ ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ, ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವ ಸಂಗೀತ, ನೃತ್ಯ ಇವಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಎಲ್ಲ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳೂ ನನಗೆ ತಕ್ಕಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಿದೆ. ಇಡೀ ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ

ತಾಳ-ಲಯಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ, ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ದುಡಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಇನ್ನಾವುದೂ ಇಲ್ಲ. ತಾಳವಾದ್ಯದ ತಂಡಗಳಿವೆ. ಅದರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾತನಾಡುವವರೂ ಇದ್ದಾರೆ. (ಸೆಮಿನಾರ್) ವಿಚಾರ ಗೋಷ್ಠಿಗಳೂ ಕೂಡ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತವೆ. ತಾಳವಾದ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಅಂತರ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಉತ್ಸವಗಳೂ ನಡೆದಿವೆ. ಒಂದು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ರೂಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಅದರ ಪರಿಚಯ ಮಾಡಿಸುವುದು, ಅದಕ್ಕೊಂದು ಹೊಸ ಆಯಾಮಾ ಕೊಡುವುದು, ಅದನ್ನು ವೃದ್ಧಿಪಡಿಸುವುದು - ಇವುಗಳಿಗೋಸ್ಕರ ಇರುವುದು ಇದೊಂದೇ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ. ಇಡೀ ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಇದೊಂದೇ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ. ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ನಾವು ಹೆಮ್ಮೆಪಡಬೇಕಾದ ವಿಷಯ.

ಅವರ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಷ್ಟು ಸಂಯೋಗಿಲ್ಲದ ಕಾಲದಲ್ಲೂ, ನಾನೇ ಅನೇಕ ಬಾರಿ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆ: ಅವರಿಗೆ ಉತ್ಸಾಹ ಜಾಸ್ತಿ. ವೆಂಕಟರಾಂಗೆ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ, ಕೌಂಟ್ ಒನ್ ಬಿಫೋರ್ ಯೂ ಸ್ಟೀಕ್ ಎಂದು. ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಕಡಿವಾಣ ಹಾಕಬೇಕೆಂದು. ಅದರ ಆ ರೀತಿಯ ಉತ್ಸಾಹದಿಂದ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡದಿದ್ದರೆ ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಕೆಲಸಗಳು ಆಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ 17 ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರು ಹೊರತಂದಿರುವ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗಳು, ಬರಿಯ ತಾಳ-ಲಯಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟಂತೆ ವೈವಿಧ್ಯ, ಎಷ್ಟು ತರಹ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಅವರ ಪಟ್ಟಿ ನೀವು ನೋಡಿದರೆ, ಈವರೆಗೂ ಇಡೀ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನು ಹೇಳಬಲ್ಲೇ, ಯಾವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯೂ ಈ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ, ಈ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ, ಈ ವೈವಿಧ್ಯತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾರೂ ಮಾಡಿಲ್ಲ. ಅದರ ಇದ್ದಕ್ಕಿಲ್ಲ ಒಂದು ಬೆಲೆ ಬರಬೇಕಾದರೆ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಕಾಲ ಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇಂದು ಮಾಡಿರುವ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ಈಗ ತಕ್ಷಣ ಯಾರೂ ನೋಡದೇ ಇರಬಹುದು. ಕಾರಾನಾಕಾಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಇದನ್ನು ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾರೆ: ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ಒಂದು ಬೆಲೆ ಬರುತ್ತದೆ. ಜನರಿಗೆ ಅದರಿಂದ ಪ್ರಯೋಜನವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಸಂಗೀತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಕ್ಕೆ, ಅದ್ದರಿಂದ ಈ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಿರಾಶರಾಗಬೇಕಾದ ಸಂದರ್ಭವಿಲ್ಲ. ಇದನ್ನು ಒಂದು ಹಲದಿಂದ 3-4 ದಿವಸಗಳ ಉತ್ಸವವನ್ನು, ಈ ವರ್ಷ 8 ದಿನ ನಡೆಸುವುದು ಕಷ್ಟ, ಇಂಥಹ ಒಂದು ಸಮಾರಂಭ, ಉತ್ಸವ ನಡೆಸಿದವರಿಗೆ ಅದರ ಹಿತಪ್ರಯೋಗ ಗೊತ್ತು. ಎಷ್ಟು ತರಹಯು ಈತಿ ಬಾಧೆ ಕೊಟಲೆಗಳು ಎಂದು. ಅದನ್ನು ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯದಿಂದ, ಮಾನಸಿಕ ಶಿಸ್ತಿನಿಂದ ವೆಂಕಟರಾಂ ಅವರು ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆ ರೀತಿಯ ಒಂದು ಮಾನಸಿಕ ಶಿಸ್ತು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅದ್ದರಿಂದ ಕೆಲಸಗಳು ಆಗಲೂ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಬೆಳೆಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಬಂದಿರುವುದು ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನದೂ ಒಂದು ಭಾಗ ಇರುವುದು ನನಗೆ ಹೆಮ್ಮೆ ತರುವ ಸಂಗತಿ. ಇದನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸಿ ಸನ್ಮಾನ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದ್ದಾರೆ: ನಾನೇನೂ ಸನ್ಮಾನ ಎಂದು ಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ನಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನೇ ನಮ್ಮ ಕಾಲಿಗೇ ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡಂತೆ. ಅದರ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಇರುವ ಒಂದು ಅದರ ಮತ್ತು ವಿಶ್ವಾಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರ ಮನಸ್ಸು ನೋಯಿಸಬಾರದು ಎಂಬ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಇದನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸಿದೆ.

ಈ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ವೆಂಕಟರಾಂ ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಇನ್ನೂ ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗಷ್ಟೆ ಶತಮಾನವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಬರಲಿ: ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಈ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ ತಾಳ-ಲಯ, ಸಂಗೀತದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಭಾಗವಾಗಿ ನೋಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಒಂದು ವಿಶೇಷ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿತ್ವ ತರುವಂತಹದು ಈಚೆಗೆ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗಿದೆ. ಪಾಶ್ಚಾತ್ಯ ರಾಜ್ಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಡಿದರೆ, ಬರೀ ತಾಳವಾದ್ಯ ಗೋಷ್ಠಿಗಳೇ ಜೀವನ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡಿವೆ. ಎಷ್ಟೋ ದೊಡ್ಡದಾದ 140 ತರಹದ ವಾದ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಇಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡು ಅಂತರರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ, ಇವೆ. 3 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಗೆ ಮುಂಚೆಯೇ ಅವರನ್ನು ಕಾದಿರಿಸಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಹೀಗಿರುವಾಗ ನಮ್ಮಲ್ಲಿ ಇದು ಒಂದು ಬಾರಿ ಬಾಲ್ಯದ ಬರಬೇಕು, ತಾಳಲಯವಾದ್ಯವನ್ನು ಪಕ್ಕವಾದ್ಯವಾಗಿ ನೋಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೇ ವಿನಃ ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ಒಂದು ವಿಶಿಷ್ಟವಾದ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿತ್ವ ಇರುವುದು, ಈ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವ ಹಲವರು ಇದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇವರದೇ "ಲಯ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ" ತಂದ ಇದೆ. ಯಥಾ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಮಣಿ ಅವರ "ತಾಳ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ" ನಮ್ಮ ರಾಮಾನುಜಯ್ಯರ ಬರೀ ಮೆಚಳಿಯರದ್ದೇ ಆದ ತಂದ ರೂಪಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದಕ್ಕಿಲ್ಲಾ ಬಹಳ ಪ್ರಾಶಸ್ತ್ಯ. ಈ ರೀತಿ ಯತ್ನಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವವರನ್ನು ಸೇರಿಸಿ, ಇನ್ನೂ ಬೆಳೆಸಿ, ವೃದ್ಧಿಸಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಭಾಗಕ್ಕೂ ಕೀರ್ತಿ ತರುವ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಗಳೂ ಸಫಲವಾಗಲಿ.

ಇಂದು ಸತ್ಯವೆಂದವರಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನೊಬ್ಬನೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಇತರ ಮಹನೀಯರೂ ಸೇರಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರೂ ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯವನ್ನೇ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗೆ ಶುಭ ಹಾರ್ದಿಸಿ ಇದು ಇನ್ನೂ ಬೆಳೆಯಲಿ, ಬೆಳಕಿಗೆ ಬರಲಿ. ಇನ್ನೂ ವೈವಿಧ್ಯತೆ ಸೇರಲಿ. ಇದು ಇನ್ನೂ ಹತ್ತಾರು ಬೆಳೆಯಲು ಕಾರಣವಾಗಿ ಆಲದಮರದ ಬಳಲು ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹಾಗೆ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗೂ ಇದರಿಂದ ಸ್ಪೂರ್ತಿ ಬಂದು, ಈ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ ಇನ್ನೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆಯಲಿ, ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರಕ್ಕೊಂದು ಕೀರ್ತಿ ಪತಾಕೆ ಹಾರಿಸುವಂತಾಗಲಿ ಎಂದು ಹಾರ್ದಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE OF PERCUSSIVE ARTS CENTRE

Indian music had identified several percussion instruments which largely accompanied different forms of musical expressions. The Sociobiological necessity of percussions in music, is a fact established of late, but the ancient Indian musicians had identified and immortalised the necessity of percussions at the rim of folk-lore and classical overtures.

The Indian percussion instruments could be segmented and applied in different demographic and social situations such as folk-lore, temple rituals and indoor classical concerts where each form had its own charm and methodology. For instance, Mridanga, Khanjari, Ghata, Morching (Karnatak) and Pakhwaj, Tabla (Hindustani) are exclusively used in indoor classical concerts, whereas sammela, Chande, Dolu (Thavi) and Cymbal (Thala) are representative of the folk-lore and temple ritualistic forms. As for the utility, the folklore forms largely remained out of the realm of the classical forms, for they neither had an identifiable shruti nor a definite set-pattern. Nevertheless the folk-lore sound patterns had an organic amalgamation with the culture that had sustained it and therefore, till recently very few attempts were made to synthesise these two forms of percussion instruments. **Till recently, percussions were considered only for supportive role, and only recently it is recognised that percussions have an independent identity of their own, as in Western ensembles.**

This presentation is under a project of "Professional groups for specified performing arts covering rare forms and other traditional forms for music ensembles-orchestrations". This PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE is planned for presentation cum Video taping/audio-taping for preservation and possible analysis for further innovations and development of these thematic expressions. This is an attempt of blending these hitherto different forms of percussion where the charm of folklore is not dispensed at the cost of tone value. To drive this idea home, tabla tarang had been included in the ensemble where rhythm and melody are given the requisite priorities. For the first time, Gethu Vadya, an ancient stringed percussion instrument is included. Unlike others, Gethu Vadya is the only stringed percussion instrument, a shruti vadya and a taala vadya. The other instruments used differ in sound, their timbre, texture, and attempt to strike a balance between classical norms and in giving an independent identity to these instruments. The artists conditioned mainly to classical music are **attempting to look beyond into new rhythmic areas and innovations-adventures.** This earnestness has to match with proper thought and planning and also create an awareness into the potentialities and also limitations of the different instruments.

Future attempts include innovations into electronic instruments and computerised music etc. Some instruments practiced by other backward community members are also put to use.

LAYA VRUSHTI

'Laya Vrushti', which means a shower of rhythm, is the first in a series of Audio Cassettes planned to exclusively present some of the innovative thoughts mentioned earlier. In three parts, Laya Vrushti presents an innovative item LAYA SAMMILAN, followed by a classical rendition, MRIDANGAM SYMPHONY, and the conventional percussion round with a blend of different instruments named PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE.

Laya Vrushti attempts to reveal the potentialities of the related instruments and stimulate exploration of new dimensions in music. The interesting feature of this presentation is the individual contribution made by each member to produce an overall enjoyable performance. The variety in the items presented and the innovations attempted establish a step towards the identification of the independent personality of each instruments.

This was released by "Sangeetha" Master recording Co, Madras

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS and details thereon:-

1. Great Laya Vaadyakaaraas of Karnatak Music by
B. M. Sundaram (Talk on 2.6.1985), Released on 1.6.86 Rs. 10/-
 2. The Art & Science of Tabla by Pandit Nikhil Ghosh
(Demo on 31.5.87 out of print)
 3. Kannada Saahityadalli Taalavaadyagala Ullekha in Kannada
by B. V. K. Sastry (Talk on 5.9.95), Released on 1.6.87 Rs. 10/-
 4. Taala Sangraha (Compiilation of data for over 1200 Taalas)
by B. M. Sundaram, Released on 31.7.87(out of print)
 5. Psychology of Laya by Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao
(lecture on 22.9.86), Released on 1.6.88 Rs. 10/-
 6. Taala Dasa Praanaas by S. R. Janakirman (lecture on 31.5.82)
Released on 1.6.88 Rs. 10/-
 7. Lecture Jewel Casket, Vol 1 Edited
by Bangalore K. Venkataram, Lectures by T. Sankaran (30.5.82),
V. K. Narayana Menon (29.5.83), Ashok Ranade (27.5.84),
Pandit Nikhil Ghosh (1.6.86), Released on 4.6.88 Rs. 20/-
 8. Chandassinalli Taala Layagalu
by Prof. M. Rajagopacharya, in Kannada (Talk on 4.9.88)
Released on 4.9.89 Rs. 10/-
 9. Devotional Music by Late P. V. Rao. Released on 30.5.89 Rs. 10/-
 10. Pallavigalu, Key-note address in Kannada by R. K. Srikantan
on 1.1.88 - released on 31.5.89 Rs. 10/-
 11. Kanakadaasara Keerthanegalu, in Kannada
(Study Circle in 1989 by R. K. Srikantan,
8 krithis in notation. Released on 28.5.90. Rs. 10/-
 12. "Yakshaganadalli Talagalu" in Kannada
by Hoshthota Manjunatha Bhatta (Talk on 19.9.89)
(Relased on 30.5.90) Rs. 10/-
 13. "Msyore Veena Paramapare" in Kannada
by Dr. V. Doreswamy Iyengar (Talk on 14.10.87) (Relased on 31.5.89) Rs. 10/-
 14. Kancheepuram Nayana Pillai, Monograph
by B. M. Sundram, (Released on 31.5.90) Rs. 10/-
 15. Inaugural Address of Talavadyothsav '89 - Monograph
by Dr. Raja Ramanna on 27.5.89, (Releasedon 8.7.90) Rs. 10/-
 16. Manipuri Tala System by Guru Bipin Singh
(Talk on 29.5.89) (Released on 26.5.91) Rs. 10/-
-

-
- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 17. | Comparative study of Talas in Hindustani and Karnatak Systems
by T. V. Gopalkrishnan, (Talk on 29.5.90)(Released on 31.5.91) | Rs. 10/- |
| 18. | Decennial celebrations (Lecture session on 31.5.92)
(Prof. R. Visweswaran, Dr. Surochana Rajendran,
B. M. Sundaram, K. S. Mahadevan) | Rs. 15/- |
| 19. | Problems of Mutual appreciation of Hindustani & Karnatak Music
(Proceedings of Seminar on 27.5.93) | Rs. 15/- |
| 20. | "World Music" by Prof. R. Visweswaran (released on 25.5.96) | Rs. 10/- |
| 21. | Monograph on Needamangalam Meenakshisundaram Pillai
(Released on 28.5.90) | Rs. 10/- |
| 22. | Monograph on Tanjore Vaidyanatha Iyer (Released on 29.5.90) | Rs. 10/- |
| 23. | Proceedings of Talavadya Seminar - 2 (on Khanjari and Ghata)
(Released on 28.5.98) | Rs. 30/- |
| 24. | Proceedings of Talavadya Seminar - 3 (on Dolu, Morching & Gethu)
(Released on 31.5.98) | Rs. 25/- |
| 25. | "Tala & Laya" - Dr. S. Ramanathan (Released on 28.5.98) | Rs. 120/- |

AUDIO CASSETTES released :

- | | | |
|----|---|----------|
| 1. | Vocal Recital of compositions of T. Chowdiah
(rendered by M. S. Sheela, S. Shankar, G. R. Jaya, Padma Gurudutt,
R. K. Padmanabha & D. V. Nagarajan & T. S. Sathyavathy) | Rs. 30/- |
| 2. | Veena recital of Veena Kinnhal (daughter of Veena L. Raja Rao) | Rs. 30/- |
| 3. | LAYA VRUSHTI - Percussion Ensemble of Percussive Arts Centre
P4 ECD 4338 released by SANGEETHA RECORDING CO., Madras | Rs. 38/- |
| 4. | Classical Melodies - Flute - V. Ananth
P6 ECD 748 released by Sangeetha Chennai | Rs. 45/- |
| 5. | Swarna Bharathi - patriotic songs in Sanskrit composed by
Mayuram Vishwanatha Sastry, Directed by : S. Shankar,
Singers: S. Shankar, P. Sashidhar, Ajai, C. R. Amarnath, Swarna Shankar,
V. Kalavathy, N. R. Sharada, Lakshmi Subramanya | Rs. 35/- |
| 6. | Karnatak Melodies on Angklung, Indonesian Bamboo instrument
by H. S. Anasuya Kulkarni. | Rs. 35/- |

"....We have every reason to be proud of this Centre, and to me it is a matter of deep appreciation to associate myself with the centre..." ".... The only way to know about our Tala system is through this publication (Taala Sangraha), which is brought out by the Percussive Arts Centre Bangalore. The Centre is living upto its name by publishing this. I wish the Centre all progress and prosperity...."

".... The Percussive Arts Centre has been doing Yeomen services in the promotion and dissemination of greater awareness and the knowledge of various aspects of percussive arts and instruments among musicians, scholars and rasikas alike. This seminar is intended to be a part of the continuing services to the music loving public as well as to classical music that the centre has been rendering all along...."

Valedictory address of Taalavaadya Seminar - 1

Sangeetha Kalanidi R.K. Srikantan

"..... The object of the Percussive Art Centre is to highlight these distinct characters and the fascinating world opened up by these instruments and make the people really conscious of the vast potentialities of these instruments and the beauty they reveal. Through numerous programmes, the Centre has highlighted interesting features and land marks of this fascinating rhythmic world during these past several years...." ".... even the range and quantum of the present collections itself is an achievement which is certainly a valuable contribution in the realm of rhythm in Indian music."

Seminars where different Talavadyas are taken up as the main subjects. This is a grey area not only to music enthusiasts but also musicians themselves. The instruments are studied from different angles like the Historical, Technical, Scientific, Aesthetic etc. ... These seminars, not only enlighten the public but also enrich knowledge available about these instruments and this lead to further improvements.

Preface to proceedings of Talavaadya Seminar - 2.

Sangeetha Kalarathna B.V.K. Sastry

"..... I am in receipt of the Quarterly Newsletter of this Percussive Arts Centre.It is really good and fine that such a newsletter comes out from Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore"

Padmasree Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman

"... Sri Bangalore K. Venkataram, our popular percussionist and also the Director of the Percussive Arts Centre, deserves compliments for his persuasive encouragement to Sri Sundaram to work out this unique volume (Taala Sangraha), for publication by the Percussive Art Centre. The Centre, although still in its tender years, has already done well in the cause of Percussive art and its research. My best wishes to the Art Centre, with fond hope that its progress would be better and higher still with march of time...."

Ganakala Bhushana A. Subba Rao

"... All in all, it was a very useful festival, one which has made the need and presence of an institution devoted to "Talavadya" felt emphatically. There is no doubt that it has attracted the attention of fresh blood which should augur well both for our classical music and the Centre in particular, which means the purpose of the festival has been served"

The musical tree in India has two basic divisions - Raaga and Taala, while raaga governs its melodic element, taala helps to maintain the balance... Yet taala has not received as much attention on the academic level. It is to fill this lacunae that the Percussive Arts Centre was founded. In a short span of about 10 years, the Centre which is only one of its kind in the country, has done pioneering work in creating awareness on the various aspects of the system as also the characteristics of the different percussion instruments or Taalavaadyas

Preface to proceedings of Talavaadya Seminar - 1.

Karnataka Kala Thilaka S.N. Chandrasekhar

"... Percussive Arts Centre who have been organising planned programmes to highlight the role of laya in music have been doing remarkable service in this direction and I wish the centre an unprecedented success in their efforts...."

Sangeetha Kalanidhi T.K. Murthy

"... I am happy that the Percussive Arts Centre, perhaps the only organisation in our country of this type have come forward to bring to light such a useful publication. I wish their efforts all success..."

Prof. U.N.G. Dakshinamurthy, Govt college of Music, Madras

... I hereby record my deep sense of appreciation of your venture of promoting the cause of performing arts and artistes You may get a feedback by arranging a series of lectures with demonstration on Indian drumming

*Dr. K.N. Bhowmick, Prof. Dept of Applied Mathematics,
Institute of Technology, B.H.U, Varanasi*

The cause you are trying to promote is admirable. I have the greatest regard for the art of rhythm ... Yours is the only institution of its kind in the country; at best there is no parallel of it in North India,

Prof. S.K. Saxena, Roopnagar, Delhi - 7

Services rendered by the Percussive Arts Centre, to the fulfilment of the percussive arts of India is unparalleled in India. During the last 15 years, the Centre has placed the Meastros of the Mridangam in equal status with the Vocalist, honoured their art and dedication with awards and public acclaim. Along with the practice of the art, the Science of the art and the synthesiser of laya and tala have been the topics of Lec-dems, helping deeper understanding and appreciation of this art. The Centre remains very active through the year, - as one can see from the number of programmes organised in a year. It covers a wide span of artistic and education oriented events.

I have only one or two suggestions to make. More lectures on Comparative study of Carnatic - Hindustani tala systems will bring better appreciation of the respective classical arts, and cultural affinities and richness of diversities. Monographs should be so printed in a pre-determined format, which will permit their binding together later, in the format of a book. My special compliments to Sri Bangalore K. Venkataram, the Executive Director of PAC, whose services to PAC are an example to other workers in the field of music, art and culture elsewhere.

Prof. R.C. Mehta

Indian Musicological Society, Baroda

Your Centre for percussion arts has been doing yeoman service to the appreciation of music for several years. It is clear from the dedication of hard working people like you in Bangalore that the Centre is recognized as a premier institution for tala vadya.

The list of publications from the Centre and the galaxy of worthy awardees who have been recognized by the Centre are very impressive indeed

A. Madhav, Pittsburgh, USA
